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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, May 11, 2006

★★

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AFP admits taking cut from RP peacekeepers' pay



By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

TALK ABOUT THE "UN-kindest cut" of all. Filipino peacekeepers have taken a cut in their \$1,000 monthly allowance supplied by the United Nations to allow

AFP ADMITS / A7



SHE'S HOT. Chili peppers cover up model Isabel Roces in a new ad of the People for Ethical Treatment of Animals suggesting to spice up your life by going vegetarian.

Population growth down

Saudi king frees 300 OFWs at GMA request

By Fe Zamora

RIYADH—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo flies home Wednesday night—early today in Manila—with a list of more than 300 Filipinos granted clemency by King Abdullah upon her request, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas reported.

The first batch of freed prisoners comprising 52 women was due to depart Riyadh aboard a Gulfair flight at 10:40 p.m. [3:40 a.m. today Manila time] ahead of Ms Arroyo's entourage that was to fly back to the Philippines from nearby Dharan.

SAUDI / A6

GMA takes direct control of Pagcor

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo has taken back direct control of the government's cash cows—the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO).

The move was ostensibly made to ensure quick and sufficient funding for the President's multi-billion-peso social projects, such as mass housing, food subsidies,

GMA TAKES / A6



THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR LOVE: Though she lives in a 15 sq. m. corner in Vitas, Tondo, and survives on P50 a day, Salvacion Ruiz, who has two other children, adopted Sandin Lee when he was abandoned by his mother.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Poor mom with rich heart adopts unwanted baby

By Christian V. Esguerra

FOR THREE PEOPLE SURVIVING on P50 a day in a squatter community in Manila, another mouth to feed ought to be the last thing on their minds.

But Salvacion "Sally" Ruiz, 58, and her two grown children did

not hesitate to welcome Sandin Lee, a bouncing baby boy abandoned by his teenage mother in the family's 15-square-meter shanty in Vitas, Tondo.

Sally, a widow of eight years, was prepared to adopt the child even before he was born.

She had been yearning for a

baby in the house because her own children—daughter Metilyn, 28, and son Salme, 25—were always away at work.

It was also Sally's way of convincing the mother, then 18, to keep what was to be her second child.

The mother had wanted to abort

the pregnancy, convinced that she was not up to the responsibility.

"But abortion is just wrong. Babies don't deserve to die," Sally said emphatically in Filipino in an interview yesterday with the INQUIRER.

The story of Sandin Lee illustrates

POOR / A8

Gov't sees fewer poor Filipinos in 2010

By Michelle V. Remo and Christian V. Esguerra

THE PHILIPPINES' ANNUAL population growth slowed down to a rate of 1.95 percent last year, prompting economic authorities to say that the deceleration would help make the country's poverty-reduction goal within reach.

Should this growth rate be sustained, the Philippines would have over 94 million people by 2010, the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) reported yesterday.

The Philippine population growth rate stood at 2.1 percent from 2000 to 2004. As of last year, the population was estimated at 85.2 million.

Romulo Neri, director general of the National Economic and Development Authority, noted that the latest population growth rate was nearing the government's medium-term target of 1.94 percent.

Neri said slowing down population growth to 1.94 percent a year was necessary to enable the Philippine economy to feed and sustain its entire population.

Achieving the 1.94-percent

POPULATION / A8

Quake blacks out C. Visayas

A RELATIVELY MILD EARTHQUAKE YESTERDAY shook Leyte island, leaving several million people in Central Visayas without electricity for about seven hours, but seismologists said there were no immediate reports of other damage.

The quake, initially measured at magnitude 3.7, knocked down a transmission tower in Ormoc City, and three power plants on the island were shut down as a preventative

measure, National Transmission Co. (Transco) president Alan Ortiz said.

No casualties were reported, the Office of Civil Defense in Manila said.

The shallow quake struck Leyte at 10:02 a.m., the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said in an advisory.

The quake's epicenter was located 14 km northeast of Ormoc City, Phivolcs said. It

QUAKE / A15

Court grants Nur plea for house arrest

By Tarra V. Quismundo

JAILED MORO REBEL LEADER Nur Misuari and his spiritual adviser are to be housemates in a Quezon City house for the next 45 days, as a Makati court yesterday granted their petition to be placed under house arrest while undergoing medical treatment.

Misuari and Ustadz Abuharis Usman, who are charged with the nonbailable offense of rebellion for the bloody 2001 uprising in Jolo, have been allowed to stay at No. 27 6th Street, New Manila, according to the order issued by Makati Judge Sixto Marella Jr.

The judge said the two detainees would pay for their living expenses while under house arrest.

Misuari's new quarters are about eight blocks away from the

COURT / A7



SUMMER'S SMOKE

Firefighters are kept busy on Wednesday with four fires hitting Metro Manila one after the other. This one hit Lucban Street in Paco where 120 families lost their homes even as one victim paddles toward what remains of his house to salvage whatever. (Story in Metro, Page A18)

SC chief fears rise of greedy legal eagles

By Armand N. Nocum

THE WAY SOME LAWYERS ARE throwing legal ethics to the wind, they may just turn out to be worse than the moneyed criminals they are defending in court.

Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban voiced this apprehension as he noted that legal technicalities were being used to advance the interests not only

of clients but also of the lawyers themselves at the expense of justice.

"Society has the most to fear from this crop of lawyers who have a wealth of legal knowledge but a threadbare ethical mooring; they may turn out to be worse than the criminal they defend," Panganiban said at the oath-taking ceremony for 1,526 new lawyers on Tuesday.

"In a society in constant flux such

as ours, there is an ever-growing temptation to cut corners for easy solutions. Sadly, some lawyers have become merely adept at being legal technicians defending their client's causes," he said.

"They have lost sight of the fact that their duty, first and foremost, is to serve the ends of justice; and that their primary fidelity is to the courts

SC CHIEF / A15



'TABAKO' AND THE TERMINATOR

Former President Fidel Ramos met last week with California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger at the governor's mansion in Sacramento, Calif. Also pictured are former US Secretary of State George Schultz 3rd from left and California Chief of Protocol Charlotte Schultz.

STEVEN HUI / ONYX OF THE GOVERNOR

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol region, Eastern Visayas and Northeastern Mindanao will experience rains and gusty winds and the coastal waters along these areas will be moderate to rough. The rest of Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms while the rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PEI RESEARCH/05/10/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

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Second FRONT PAGE

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Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laosag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Lagaypi	Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Foes find GMA guilty in 'trial'

By Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo has been found guilty of corruption and of electoral fraud in a mock trial conducted by civil and political groups opposed to her rule.

The month-long investigation and trial organized by the tribunal calling itself the Citizens' Congress for Truth and Accountability (CCTA) has no legal value but have helped to keep the heat on the President nearly a year after vote-rigging and corruption scandals emerged to rock her presidency.

The CCTA, which started its proceedings in late 2005, expectedly found Ms Arroyo guilty of electoral fraud, human rights violations and graft and corruption.

Former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Jr., who chairs the CCTA fact-finding committee, said the group would send a complaint to the United Nations that he said could lead to the nullification of the 2004 elections and the holding of snap polls.

Complaint to UN

Guingona said a draft complaint would be filed before the UN Human Rights Committee under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, requesting that the UN send to the country



FORMER Vice President Teofisto Guingona turns over copies of the final report of the fact finding committee to Rep. Francis Escudero and Br. Armin Luistro.

JOAN BONDOC

to verify the evidence of electoral fraud gathered by the CCTA.

The CCTA presented at a press conference a 203-page report recommending Ms Arroyo's resignation and the filing of charges against her.

The President has steadfastly refused to step down.

After hearing 22 witnesses and reviewing voluminous documents in five public hearings, the 15-member CCTA "presidium" found that Ms Arroyo al-

legedly cheated her way to the presidency by tampering election results in four vote-rich provinces.

More than P7 billion in state funds were allegedly used to fund government projects allegedly designed to lure large

number of votes for Ms Arroyo in the 2004 presidential elections, the organizers said.

Guingona alleged the Arroyo camp may have stolen up to 1.2 million votes to ensure her victory.

Human rights violations

The CCTA also found the President liable for massive human rights violations and political persecution, citing her failure to stop abductions and killings of political activists allegedly committed by policemen and soldiers.

It also urged "the international community to withdraw aid and recognition from the Arroyo government."

The CCTA asked the President or her representatives to offer evidence in her defense but nobody came.

There was no immediate reaction from the President, who is visiting Saudi Arabia, or her officials but her camp has dismissed the mock trial as an attempt by power-hungry opposition rabble rousers to revive complaints similar to the impeachment raps that were trashed by Congress last September.

The committee report was received by the House Minority Leader Francis Escudero and civil society leader Bro. Armin Luistro of the Bukluran ng Katotohanan. Escudero said the minority was already preparing a fresh impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo.

"Whether we like it or not, impeachment will still be the only proper way to have the President removed," Escudero said.

Palace set to appeal SC rulings on EO 464, PP 1017

MALACANANG WILL FILE WITHIN the next few days its motion for reconsideration striking down the Supreme Court ruling on Executive Order No. 464 and Proclamation 1017.

"We are hopeful the High Court will somehow, after taking second look, reconsider those portions of the decision that we will appeal," said Solicitor General Antonio Nachura in a phone interview.

Malacañang's legal team suffered string of setbacks in the last few weeks with the tribunal thumbing down the President's calibrated pre-emptive response

(CPR) policy on street protesters; an order barring all Cabinet officials, government executives and uniformed officers from appearing in congressional hearings without her consent (EO 464); and her declaration of a state of national emergency (PP 1017).

Nachura said the government would appeal the ruling on 1017 specifically on its decision that President Macapagal-Arroyo "must first get legislative authorization to exercise her power granted under the Constitution (section 17 of Article 12) to take over public and businesses vested with public interest."

Malacañang is also set to appeal the high court's ruling on the unconstitutionality of warrantless arrests and the violation of the freedom of expression in the government's physical presence in a daily broadsheet.

Nachura said his team would file by Friday or Monday the government's appeal on the SC decision on EO 464.

Nachura said the government would not appeal anymore the ruling on CPR considering that the justices upheld the constitutionality of the "no permit, no rally" under Batasan Pambansa 880.

Police officials, meanwhile, re-

mained baffled about the meaning of the high tribunal's decisions.

The Philippine National Police wanted a "clarification" of the court's ruling on the arrest of demonstrating activists last February.

"According to them (justices), warrantless arrest is unconstitutional but we found that there is a provision in our rules of court that legalizes warrantless arrest," said police spokesperson Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, himself a lawyer.

Pagdilao cited Section 5, Article 113 of the rules of court as permitting such arrests. He also maintained that their

actions that week were "well within the parameters" of this rule.

"Now, they are saying that it is rendered unconstitutional. So we want that clarified further," he added.

Pagdilao's immediate superior, PNP chief Director General Arturo Lomibao, said their actions were "defensible."

"So I don't think there should be an apology," he said when asked if the SC's series of rulings against the government meant that an apology to people the police had arrested or places they had raided was in order.

Palace names 4 new justices to appeals court

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY announced the appointment of four new associate justices in the Court of Appeals and one in the Sandiganbayan, and a new deputy commissioner in the Commission on Audit.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita made the announcement during a briefing in Malacañang.

The four new appellate associate justices—Romeo F. Barza (Makati City Regional Trial Court Branch 208), Marlene Sison (presiding judge Quezon City RTC Branch 85), Agustin Dizon (Quezon City RTC Branch 80), and Sixth Marella Jr. (Makati City RTC Branch 138)—have a combined experience of 131 years in law practice.

The new Sandiganbayan associate justice is Samuel Martires (La Union RTC Branch 32) has 29 years experience in law practice.

Ermita also announced the appointment of Juanito D. Espino Jr. who will take the place of former COA deputy commissioner Emmanuel Dalman.

RP asks Viets to explain cell site on Spratlys

THE PHILIPPINES WILL seek clarification from Vietnam over reports that a state firm will soon launch a mobile phone service in the disputed Spratly Islands, a foreign office source said Wednesday.

Vinaphone is expected to launch its service in the islands next month, Nguyen Huu Thuong, director of a government telecom service center based in Vietnam's central province of Danang, told AFP Monday.

"We have not received any official confirmation on that report," the foreign office source said, stressing that a code of conduct among claimants to the Spratlys prevents any of them putting up structures that could disrupt the status quo.

The Spratlys chain is claimed in whole or in part by Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

All except Brunei maintain a military presence in the area, which is considered a potential flashpoint in Southeast Asia. AFP

Drilon-Villar Senate deal to face test

THE TERM-SHARING AGREEMENT BETWEEN SENATE President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. will be put to a test when the 13th Congress opens its third regular session in July.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile yesterday added his voice to the growing opinion that the pair could not impose their pact on the chamber, and maintained that anybody aspiring for the Senate presidency has to go through a vote.

"With due respect to them, they can't decide for the chamber. Their decision is their decision. It will still have to be submitted to the chamber for voting. We're not bound by any agreements in the Senate," he said in a briefing.

"I'm not party to the agreement," he added, echoing a view expressed by Senators Richard Gordon and Manuel "Mar" Roxas II.

Enrile said that if Drilon would voluntarily yield his post in July, Villar or any senator for that matter should be prepared to contest the post in an election.

"If Frank Drilon, being a party to the gentleman's agreement, will voluntarily relinquish, then Manny Villar will be free to seek position. I don't know if there's anyone who would challenge him," he said in a briefing.

Question of numbers

"It's a question of numbers," he added, noting that anybody who could muster 13 votes in the 23-member chamber could snare the post. "Anybody can become the Senate President if he has the numbers."

The senator said he expected Drilon as well as those who voted for him for Senate President to support Villar if he declares interest, but he himself kept the press guessing how he would vote if the time comes.

"I don't know yet how I will vote in that event," he said. Enrile had joined the bloc of Drilon, who broke away and called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to resign in July last year amid charges she stole the presidency in the May 2004 elections.

Drilon, who is attending the Inter-Parliamentary Union summit in Kenya, and Villar could not be reached for comment.

The pair forged the agreement on July 12, 2004 supposedly to avert acrimonious wrangling and ensure smooth legislative work in view of the then looming fiscal crisis.

Under the deal, Drilon would serve as Senate President during the first two years, or the first two regular sessions of the 13th Congress, and Villar, the third year or third regular session, which begins in July this year.

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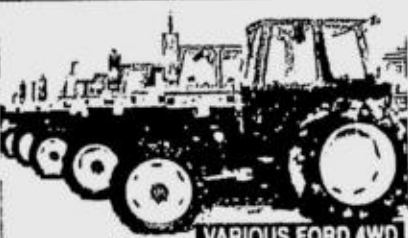
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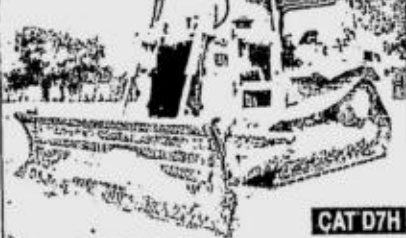
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House slams Senate for 'obsession' to oust GMA

By Michael Lim Ubac

IN AN APPARENT DISREGARD OF INTER-parliamentary courtesy, the House majority yesterday lashed at the Senate for its "obsession to oust" President Macapagal-Arroyo after senators vowed to pursue their legislative inquiries into the raging espionage case and the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal.

"Their obsession to oust President Arroyo has blinded their primary task to legislate. They are now the National Fault Finding Investigators of the Republic," said House Majority Leader Prospero C. Nograles.

After a month-long Lenten break, Congress will resume its sessions on Monday.

Nograles said that should the Senate continue neglecting its legislative function, it "may as well be the police or the Commission on Audit and the Office of the Ombudsman, the fiscal and the judge combined not senators of the Republic."

He renewed his call to Senate President Franklin Drilon to focus on legislating important measures instead of pursuing congressional inquiries which, he said, was aimed at discrediting the Arroyo government.

Nograles, who heads the powerful House committee on rules, issued the statement after the Senate vowed to continue its investigations of controversies and allegations against the President and her officials.

What is espionage?

On Monday, Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the Senate committee on national defense, said he was considering conducting an inquiry into the espionage case involving former intelligence analyst Leandro Aragoncillo and three opposition leaders, to come up with a law on espionage.

So far, espionage had not been not clearly defined in the Articles of War, said Biazon.

Biazon also said the hearings on the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal would resume next week and would focus on electoral fraud.

Nograles said several House-approved measures in the Senate had long been overdue.

Congress has only nine more days before its sine die adjournment on June, followed by more than a month-long recess.

Up for deliberations by the Senate are the House-approved P1-trillion national budget appropriations bill, anti-terror bill, bill exempting minimum wage earners from tax, housing department bill and billion trees bill, among others.

"They are wasting time investigating without legislating," Nograles said.

House Deputy Majority Leader Rodolfo An-

tonino had a different take on the Senate inquiries and its continued refusal to support Charter change.

"Obviously, the opposition is still sticking to their plot of ousting the President and Vice President Noli de Castro in order to install their own kind of President, who obviously would be Senate President Franklin Drilon following the constitutional succession of power," said Antonino.

The pro-administration lawmaker expected that once Ms Arroyo was ousted, De Castro would be forced to resign, while Drilon would become acting President.

"As such, he must call for election for both positions under Article 7, Section 10 of the 1987 Constitution where he can also run for President," said Antonino, explaining that as acting President, "Drilon, the candidate, would have the entire executive branch, the Armed Forces, the Philippine National Police and the local government units at his disposal to ensure victory."

Death sentence of 79 convicts commuted to life

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS granted executive clemency to 79 death convicts barely a month after announcing her new policy of foregoing any executions under her watch.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the order commuting the sentence of the 79 death convicts was signed by Ms Arroyo on May 4. The list was endorsed by the Department of Justice and Bureau of Corrections.

This move has come as no surprise after the President announced in her Easter message this year that she was commuting the maximum penalty on all death row convicts to life imprisonment.

But Malacañang executives had to clarify the President's policy after legal experts questioned the President's move to commute the death penalty on a wholesale basis when the laws clearly state that such pardon be granted on a case-by-case basis.

Malacañang also announced that the President was endorsing as urgent a bill seeking the abolition of the death penalty in keeping with the Catholic Church's stand on capital punishment. No execution has been undertaken under the Arroyo administration.

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Dean Pacifico A. Agabin - Dean, Lyceum Law School, Dean, UP Law School (1989-1995). Graduated LL.B. U.P. Law 1960, Yale Law School, LL.M., J.S.D., 1965. He is an authority in constitutional law. Partner, Agabin Versoza Hermoso Layaoen & De Castro

Atty. Elnen L. Meneses, Jr. - Chief, Anti-Fraud Division, National Bureau of Investigation. He leads various operations involving search warrants, seizures, and warrants of arrest.

M/Gen Pantaleon G. Dumlaog, Jr. (ret.) - Deputy Director General, PNP, Commanding General - Criminal Investigation Service & Narcotics Command. He is also a practicing lawyer.

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TANAUAN POLL CASE SC upholds Comelec ruling ousting mayor

By Armand N. Nocum in
Manila, and Marlon Ramos, PDI
Southern Luzon Bureau

THE SUPREME COURT HAS upheld the decision of the Commission on Elections declaring Sonia Torres-Aquino as the duly elected mayor of Tanauan City, Batangas, ending a dispute that led to the freezing of the city's bank account since last February.

In a four-page resolution released last Monday, the court threw out a petition by former Mayor Alfredo C. Corona questioning the Comelec's ruling and asking the court to restrain the poll body from enforcing its decision.

Immediately after the Supreme Court's ruling was released last Monday, Torres-Aquino told reporters at her office that she expected Corona to respect the decision "because he himself said that he would only honor a decision from the Supreme Court."

Economic development

"Finally, the city of Tanauan can now move on," she added. "With the decision of the Supreme Court, we can proceed with our plans for better service and economic development for our people."

She called on pro-Corona city councilors to pass a resolution allowing her to enter into financial transactions in behalf of the city government. The council had refused to pass such a resolution, prompting the local branch of the Land Bank of the Philippines to freeze the city's bank account as it could not honor the mayor's signature without the resolution.

The mayoral row adversely affected the functions of the city government as Corona and his followers had originally refused to leave his office to protest the Comelec's decision to install Tor-

res-Aquino as city mayor last Feb. 9. Corona eventually gave up the post and went to the Supreme Court.

The case stemmed from an election protest against Corona filed by Torres-Aquino which was assigned to the Comelec's second division, which had only Commissioners Mehol K. Saddain and Florentino Tuason Jr. as members. Comelec Chair Benjamin S. Abalos appointed Commissioner Rufino S.B. Javier as the third member.

On Dec. 22, the panel ruled in favor of Torres Aquino, with Tuason dissenting, and later issued a writ of execution.

En banc decision

But Corona petitioned for a reconsideration of the decision, and the case was taken up by the Comelec en banc. Two commissioners inhibited themselves, two voted for the motion but the two others voted to reject it.

But with the impending retirement of two commissioners, the Comelec decided en banc last Feb. 2 to enforce the writ of execution earlier issued by its second division, in effect upholding its earlier ruling.

It was at this point that Corona went to the Supreme Court, questioning Abalos' appointment of a third commissioner to the Comelec's second division. He said the Comelec should have also conducted another hearing.

But the high court said the Comelec rules and procedures "clearly sanctions the appointment made by (Abalos)."

The court also ruled that following the retirement of the two commissioners, the Comelec "may no longer set the case for rehearing." It added that "since the commission en banc was equally divided in opinion, the motion for reconsideration should be deemed lost," thus leaving the original decision of the Comelec's second division.

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Marie France

PHILAMLIFE STRENGTHENS MANAGEMENT TEAM AFTER POSTING RECORD PROFIT IN '05

MAKATI CITY, May 10, 2006 - Following a robust performance in 2005 with a record 44% consolidated net income growth for the year, The Philippine American Life and General Insurance Company (Philamlife), the country's number one life insurance company, bared the appointment of new executives to various posts in a bid to further strengthen the organization.

Philamlife president & CEO and American International Group Inc., (AIG) country manager Jose L. Cuisia, Jr. announced that the company's Board of Directors has elected Michel Khalaf as Deputy President and Chief Operating Officer, Jack Howell as Senior Vice President (and concurrent Philam Plans President and CEO), and Terrence Cummings as First Vice President & Head of Life Profit Center.

Mr. Khalaf will manage the insurance operations of Philamlife to include its sales, marketing, agency training, insurance operations, information technology, finance and administration, controllership and actuarial divisions. He will likewise be responsible for the operations of Philamlife's insurance subsidiaries and affiliates, Philam Plans, Inc., Philam Equitable Life Assurance Company, PhilamCare Health Systems, Inc., and Philam Financials Advisory Services, Inc.

Before Mr. Khalaf's current assignment, he held a number of senior management posts in different AIG companies in several countries. He started the Egypt operations of American Life Insurance Company (ALICO), where he served as General Manager for four years, and in 2001 was appointed regional Senior Vice President for Poland and New Operations. He also served as president and CEO of

AMPLICO Life with responsibility over the life, pension and mutual fund operations in Poland and the life operations in Romania, Lithuania and Latvia.

Mr. Khalaf will report directly to Mr. Cuisia, who continues to maintain overall management responsibility over the Philam Group of Companies.

As FVP and Head of Life Profit Center, Mr. Cummings will formulate product development strategies, initiate new product ideas, identify market opportunities and distribution needs, implement new initiatives to enhance and monitor profitability and processing quality and effectiveness.

Prior to his appointment, Mr. Cummings was head of the Product Development team in China.

Mr. Howell is appointed Senior Vice President of Philamlife and will be seconded to Philam Plans as President & CEO. He will have management responsibility for Philam Plans to ensure the achievement of profitability, operational efficiency and compliance with local and corporate requirements.

He joined AIG in November 2002 as part of Domestic Brokerage Group Operations and was appointed Director of Financial Management, Life Division in March 2005. He moved to Hong Kong to assume the position of Vice President for Strategic Operations in December 2005. Prior to joining AIG, he worked in professional consulting firms such as Charles River Associates, Inc. and Boston Consulting Group.

His experience and expertise in financial management and strategic development will be invaluable in

expanding the business success of Philam Plans.

Meanwhile, after being seconded to Philam Plans as president and CEO, Mr. Jesus G. Hofileña re-assumes his key role in Philamlife as Executive Vice President for Sales, Marketing and Agency Training to fully focus on new sales & marketing initiatives aimed at maintaining the company's leadership in the life insurance industry. During his stewardship in Philam Plans, he was able to maintain the company's leadership in the pre-need industry despite the difficulties encountered by the sector and the challenges confronting the organization.

International expertise, local know-how

This development is part of AIG's worldwide effort to share its global insurance and financial expertise among its local member companies spread across 130 countries and jurisdictions. "With AIG's formidable financial strength, unrivaled distribution, innovative products and the industry's most talented professionals, we expect this move to further strengthen the leadership of Philamlife in the country," according to Mr. Cuisia.

He further adds, "these new management changes will help ensure that Philamlife has the strongest management team to carry out our strategies and business plans for the future. Each of these new executives has a proven track record and substantial international exposure through AIG's global operations."

Philamlife is the largest and most diversified life insurance company in the country. It is the only financial institution to ever receive the Platinum Trusted Brand Award.

Search for RP seamen pressed

THE PHILIPPINES YESTERDAY URGED THE South African government to resume search and rescue operations for 26 mostly Filipino crewmen lost at sea after their vessel sank last week.

The appeal was also joined by the Romanian and Greek governments, the Philippine foreign office said in a statement.

The Greek-registered MV Alexandros T bulk carrier sank off the southeastern coast of South Africa last week in stormy weather.

Eighteen Filipino crewmen were among the 26 still missing, while six Filipinos and a Romanian were plucked to safety after hours in rough seas.

AFP



Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines ("DBP"), through its Bids and Awards Committee ("BAC"), hereby issues this invitation to interested parties to apply for pre-qualification and to bid for the purchase and assumption of DBP's rights, title, interest and obligations on certain non-performing loans and assets with the aggregate amount of Two Hundred Fourteen Million One Hundred Forty Thousand and 00/100 (P214,140,000.00). The non-performing loans and assets will be sold on CASH BASIS ONLY, AS-IS, WHERE-IS-BASIS AND NO RECOURSE TO DBP.

The non-performing loans and assets will be sold through a sealed-bid public auction process. Detailed Bidding Guidelines and Information Materials will be provided to each bidder that qualifies to participate in the public auction.

All interested parties may obtain starting on May 11, 2006 to May 23, 2006, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. the Terms of Reference for Pre-qualification from and at the following address upon payment of non-refundable fee of Pesos: Fifty Thousand and 00/100 (P50,000.00):

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BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE ("BAC")
c/o The Head, Remedial Management 2, Asset Management
Ground Floor, DBP Building
Development Bank of the Philippines
Sen. G. J. Puyat Avenue cor. Makati Avenue
Makati City, Philippines 1200

Each interested party that submits itself for pre-qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria set forth in the Terms of Reference for Pre-qualification.

Deadline for the submission of eligibility requirements for prequalification shall be on May 25, 2006 at 4:00 p.m., Manila time and is non-extendible.

THE DBP ASSUMES NO OBLIGATION WHATSOEVER TO COMPENSATE OR INDEMNIFY ANY INTERESTED PARTY, PRE-QUALIFIED BIDDER OR WINNING BIDDER, AS THE CASE MAY BE, FOR ANY EXCUSE OR LOSS THAT ANY SUCH PARTY(IES) MAY INCUR IN THE PARTICIPATION IN THE PRE-QUALIFICATION AND BIDDING PROCESS.

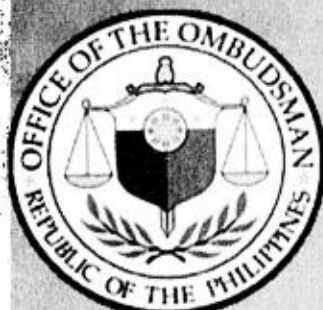
DBP RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTY(IES) FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE PRE-QUALIFICATION; AND, REJECT ANY AND ALL BID(S), TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BID(S) AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE BANK IS FINAL AND BINDING.

For particulars, please inquire as follows:

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BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE ("BAC")
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Ground Floor, DBP Building
Development Bank of the Philippines
Sen. G. J. Puyat Avenue cor. Makati Avenue
Makati City, Philippines 1200
Telephone no.: (632) 818-95-11 Locals 2167 and 2169

(Sgd.) ARMANDO O. SAMIA
Executive Vice President and
Chairman, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI-May 11 & 18, 2006)



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by Edilberto Reyes III
interpreter : 9th Avenue
I AM A SHIELD

by Ruben Lopez Jr.
interpreter : Reuben Laurente
ANG KAILANGANG GAWIN

by Gary Granada
interpreter : Dong Abay
CROSSROADS

by Christine Bendebel
Interpreter : Isha Abubakar
SABAY TAYONG MAGPAKIKI NG
MAGANDA AYAYON

by Mike Villegas
interpreter : Myra Ruaro a.k.a. Skarlet
WALANG KURAP

by Gideon Marcelo
interpreter : Gungee Marcelo and the Hood
KAHIT NA

by Roberto David
SIMULAN NATIN

by Chona Borromeo
interpreter : Amadeus

TAYO NANG MAGLINGKOD SA BAYAN
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interpreter :

and AWARDING OF THE WINNERS OF THE
INTER-UNIVERSITY DEBATE COMPETITION

Garduce sets final assault on Everest

By Alcuin Papa

VETERAN MOUNTAINEER ROMI GARDUCE is getting ready for the final assault on Mt. Everest, the highest mountain in the world.

In an interview over a phone and video patch, Garduce said an assault would be possible in the next few days until next week but would depend largely on the weather.

He said Everest Camp 4 had just been opened and was being stocked with supplies of the different expeditions.

Garduce, who is currently resting at the Everest Base Camp after reaching Camp 3 over the weekend, said an assault on the summit will take around seven to eight days from Base Camp.

"We need just a little more patience. Please pray for good weather and good health. I've been lucky because I'm acclimatizing very well. I'm fine," Garduce told his audience in Filipino.

FPMEE at Camp 3

Meanwhile, two members of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition Team (FP-MEE), Leo Oracion and Pastor Emata, are already at Camp 3, according to co-expedition leader Butch Sebastian.

"They are setting up ropes to Camp 4 and within the week or two, weather permitting, they will try for the summit," Sebastian told the INQUIRER.

In August last year, adventure racers Oracion and Emata reached the summit Mt. Muztagh-Ata (24,758 feet) in the Himalayan range and set the record for the highest altitude reached by a Filipino.

The record was broken a month later when Garduce, a systems analyst in his 30s, reached the peak of Mt. Cho-Oyu (26,906 feet), the sixth-highest mountain in the world.

Good weather is important for an assault attempt. Once the climbers reach Camp 4, they will sleep a few hours only before making their final push for the summit at around midnight or early morning. This will allow them to descend in the afternoon of the next day.

The FPMEE is being supported by ABS-CBN while Garduce is being backed by rival network GMA 7.

THE DAILY GOSPEL



Thursday, May 11, 2006
4th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 13:13-25
Gospel: John 13:16-20

After Jesus had washed the feet of the disciples he said, "Truly, I say to you, the servant is not greater than his master, nor is the messenger greater than he who sent him. Understand this, and blessed are you if you put it into practice."

"I am not speaking of you all, because I know the ones I have chosen and the Scripture has to be fulfilled that says, 'The one who shared my table has risen against me. I tell you this now before it happens, so that when it does happen, you may know that I am He.'"

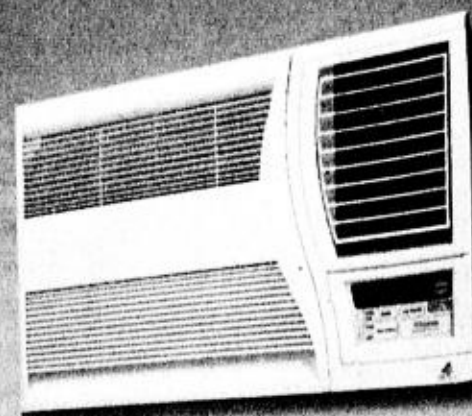
"Truly, I say to you, whoever welcomes the one I send, welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me, welcomes the One who sent me."

Commentary
Using history, the law, and the prophets to introduce them to Jesus the Savior, Paul and his companions preach to the Jews who live far from Jerusalem and to all others who are interested. The people have heard of John the Baptist and so Paul uses John's words, exhorting them to look for another who comes after him—to look for Jesus. And Jesus confirms this mission saying: "he who accepts anyone I send accepts me and in accepting me accepts him who sent me." We are all bound together in the Father, the Son/Word and Spirit.

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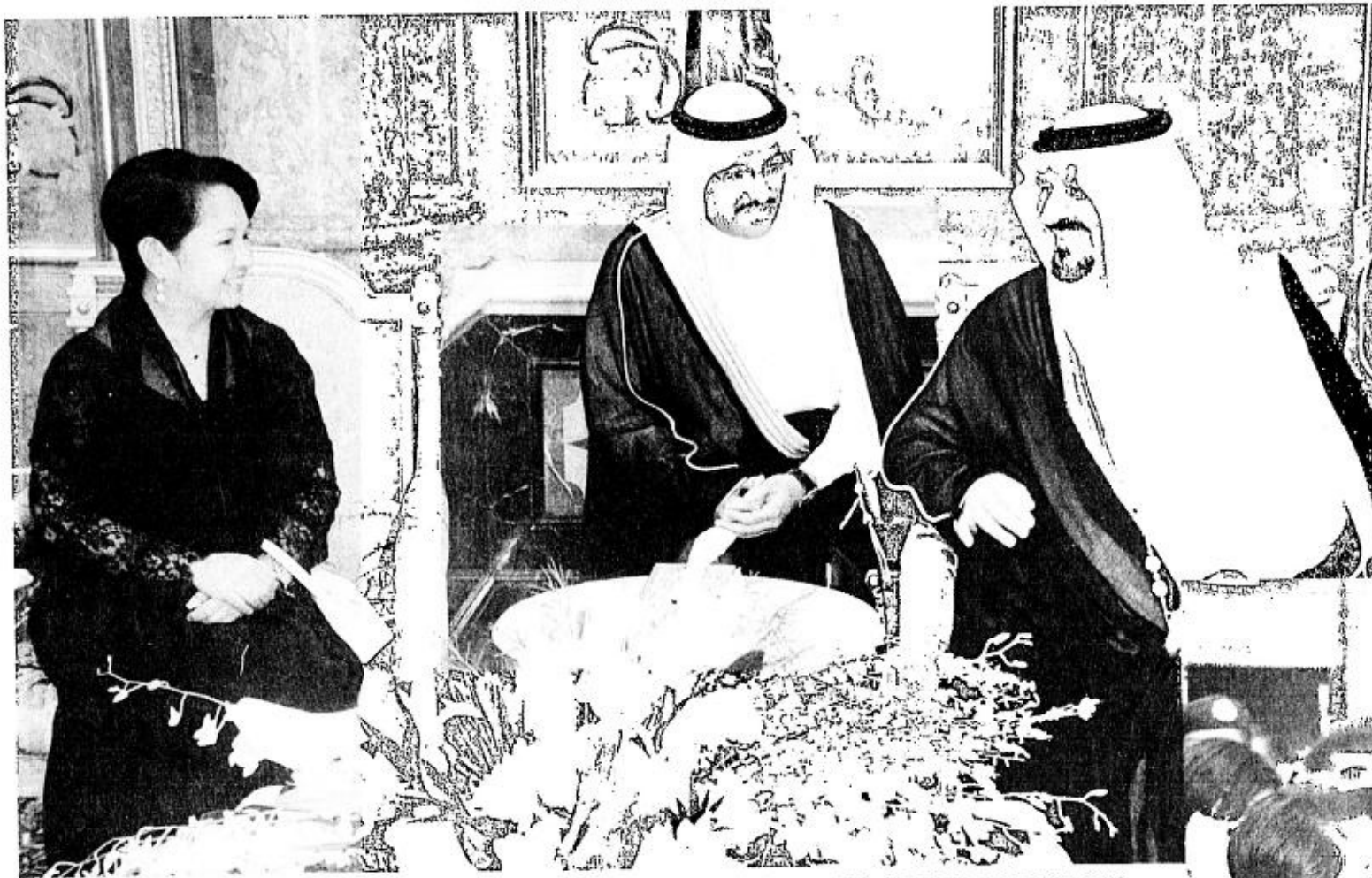
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GMA IN THE COMPANY OF ROYALS

ALL-AROUND CORDIALITY marks the meeting in Riyadh between President Arroyo and Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz (extreme right), who's also the deputy prime minister and minister of defense on Monday. Before they settled down to business, the prince hosted a state dinner for the President.



LADIES OF NOTE: President Arroyo is flanked by Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas and Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago during Ms Arroyo's meeting with Filipino workers in Jeddah. MALACANANG PHOTO



SOMETHING TO WRITE HOME ABOUT: OFWs eagerly reach out to President Arroyo when she meets with them at the ballroom of Le Gulf Meridien in Al Khobar on the third day of her four-day state visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



BAREFOOT IN THE SAND: Ms Arroyo with a Saudi Aramco official visits the oil company at the Sheiba desert which holds Petron's majority ownership. Saudi's oil minister assures the President that Saudi Arabia is prepared to make up for any oil supply shortage in the Philippines.



ROUSING WELCOME: In Jeddah on Tuesday, Ms Arroyo is met at the Royal Terminal of the King Abdulaziz International Airport by local officials led by the Royal Chief of Protocol of the Western Region and members of the Philippine Consulate.

Saudi king frees 300 OFWs at GMA's request

From page A1

Another batch consisting of 287 pardoned OFWs will leave on May 13 aboard a chartered flight for Manila, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

Ms Arroyo broke the news about the pardons after a state dinner hosted by King Abdullah on Sunday following her arrival in Riyadh for a four-day visit.

The Saudi monarch initially talked about pardoning only 50 Filipinos convicted of crimes ranging from theft to prostitution.

The list grew to 138 on Monday. On Tuesday night, Sto. Tomas said it could well go beyond 300 as Saudi authorities were still consulting with the Philippine consular officers about the release of

Filipinos jailed in their areas.

"The King has given his orders, and they are complying," said Sto. Tomas.

'A gift'

She said some 400 Filipinos were languishing in jails in the desert kingdom, where about 1 million Filipinos work. She said even those convicted of embezzlement would be released and monetary claims against them written off by King Abdullah.

Staff members at the consular offices were working overtime preparing the travel documents of the pardoned Filipinos.

In her speech before the Filipino community at the Le Meridien Hotel in Riyadh on Tuesday night, the

President expressed her appreciation for the "warmth and generosity" of King Abdullah. She said she was pleased with the royal gesture and called it a "gift."

Feted with songs, dances

In her meetings with overseas Filipino workers at the open court of the Philippine Embassy compound and the ballrooms of the Le Meridien hotels in Jeddah and Riyadh, Ms Arroyo was feted with Philippine songs and dances.

Love of country, as expressed in songs like "Ako ay Pilipino" permeated the venues. Without doubt, the favorite was "Babalik ka rin," a haunting melody of one longing to return home after years of staying abroad.

But the idea of coming home seemed just impossible to many.

Surprised at the knowledge that Ms Arroyo was at the Le Meridien Hotel in Jeddah, a mail carrier from Bulacan who delivered a package to the business center at the hotel said: "Good that she's here. Maybe she could see how the embassy people are treating OFWs here."

According him, many embassy staff members were not doing enough to help OFWs who run away from abusive employers.

Looking after own selves

"We really have to look after ourselves here," said the man, who said he had been in Jeddah for six years and asked that his name not be used.

But he would not go home, either, saying there was no job waiting for him in the Philippines. It was a question thrown at Sto. Tomas in her meetings with Filipinos.

A nurse who had been in Damman for 16 years turned pensive when asked if she would consider repatriating. "I have a husband and a baby here. Our life is OK," she said.

Staying put despite risks

In fact, Filipinos practically provide the human engine that runs Saudi Arabia, working anywhere from the airport terminal to shopping malls, restaurants, hotels, hospitals and many homes. Pinoy villages have also sprouted, including one in Riyadh. The Sarawat

mall in Jeddah has become a favorite hangout.

Roy Cimatu, special Philippine envoy to the Middle East, said Filipinos preferred to stay abroad even under harsh conditions to earn money to send home.

When the Philippine government offered to provide free transport to OFWs who wanted to go home at the height of the US war in Iraq, Cimatu said less than a dozen of them availed themselves of the offer.

Under the conditions, Cimatu said the government could only "keep them out of harm's way in their areas of work."

But the Filipino workers still yearn for home, at least in their minds and in their songs.

GMA takes direct control of Pagcor, PCSO

From page A1

medical services, education and utilities.

Although nearly a third of the P1-trillion national budget has been earmarked for social services, Ms Arroyo apparently feels this is not enough and has to have full control of the funds of Pagcor and PCSO as well.

Pagcor was originally under the Office of the President. It was moved to the Department of Finance in 2004 in a bid to inject more professionalism in its management and maximize its earning capacity.

Priority projects

Based on its charter, Presidential Decree No. 1869, Pagcor is compelled to submit periodic reports of all infrastructure and so-

cio-civic projects that were bankrolled from its earnings.

Executive Order No. 330-A signed on March 6 returned Pagcor to Malacañang's control in a bid to tap funding to "finance priority infrastructure and socio-civic projects as determined by the President."

Pagcor remitted P1.046 billion to the President's social fund in 2004 or more than double its contribution of P475.5 million in 2003. This was exclusive of the government's 50-percent cut in the Pagcor's revenues which amounted to P9.196 billion in 2004, up 16 percent from P7.871 billion in 2003.

A government executive, who refused to be identified because he had not received clearance to speak on the issue, said that Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita

had been tasked to screen all purchases of Pagcor worth more than P1 million.

Three weeks after moving Pagcor, the President signed on March 27 Executive Order No. 520 which mandated the return of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office to Malacañang from the Department of Health.

Justification

The President justified the move by noting that it would "facilitate coordination of policies and programs with the view of ensuring the effective implementation of the social agenda of the President."

In the EO, Ms Arroyo cited PCSO's vital support to her social agenda as the principal agency raising and providing

funds for health programs, medical assistance and services and charities national in character.

Ms Arroyo named her chief of staff, Michael Defensor, in charge of PCSO.

Centralizing ad funds

The return of Pagcor and PCSO to Malacañang's fold comes on the heels of the President's decision to centralize the government's advertising funds under her communications group led by Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

All advertising and information campaigns to be undertaken by government agencies and government-owned and controlled corporations such as Pagcor and PCSO have to be screened and approved by the Palace.



ERMITA to screen all Pagcor purchases more than P1 million



GENUINO: Directly under GMA—over again

Court grants Nur's plea for house arrest

From page A1
St. Luke's Medical Center where he and Usman have been confined since Jan. 28, following a court order granting them a medical furlough.

The two accused rebels have since asked for several extensions of their hospital stay, citing the need for continued medical treatment.

In his order, Marella said the two detainees would be allowed to live at the New Manila address for medical reasons but would continue to be under the custody of the Philippine National Police for the entire period.

The judge said a hearing would be in one and a half months at the New Manila house or the hospital—should the two accused happen to be confined there at the time—to determine if his order would need to be amended.

Detained for 4 years

Misuari and Usman had been detained for four years at Fort Sto. Domingo in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, for their alleged role in the Jolo uprising in which some 100 people were killed.

Marella said he found merit in the petition for house arrest for several reasons. He said the 65-year-old Misuari was found to have hypertension, while Us-

man, 68, was being treated for diabetes.

The judge also considered the recommendation of the two rebels' attending physician, Dr. Ma. Bella Siasoco, who said "the place of confinement of both accused must have quick access to medical facilities" so they could be brought to the hospital within five minutes in an emergency.

Marella noted that it would take from one to three hours to get to St. Luke's from Fort Sto. Domingo. The judge also cited the lack of adequate medical facilities in the Sta. Rosa facility where only one physician was attending to some 800 detainees.

The judge directed PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao to supervise the implementation of the transfer of the detainees, and the PNP health service director to monitor their medical condition and to submit a weekly report to the court.

Case for reinvestigation

Court proceedings on the rebellion case have been suspended since February, after Marella remanded the case to the Department of Justice for reinvestigation on a defense motion.

In the petition for house

'Humanitarian gesture'

By Fe Zamora

DAMMAN, SAUDI ARABIA (VIA PLDT)—PRESIDENTIAL Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza said yesterday that placing Nur Misuari under house arrest was a humanitarian gesture that had no bearing on his rebellion case.

Misuari's house arrest came just as a high-level mission from the influential Organization of Islamic Conference was to arrive in Mindanao to monitor the implementation of the second phase of the 1996 peace agreement with Moro National Liberation Front which Misuari founded in the 70s.

A Philippine delegation led by Dureza met with the OIC officials in Jeddah on Tuesday to finalize the plans for the Islamic mission to Mindanao this month.

Dureza said the mission underscored the OIC intentions to "work very closely with the government."

"There is renewed effort now to bring MNLF and government and prepare a joint catch-up plan for Mindanao," he said.

arrest filed by Misuari's lawyer with the Makati court last month, Misuari and Usman asked to be allowed to stay at the Quezon City house.

But the defense did not disclose who the owner of the residence was or if the two detainees would be renting or living with relatives or friends.

AFP admits taking cut ...

From page A1

the military to cover the costs of their deployment abroad, the Armed Forces admitted yesterday.

Predictably, the 330 soldiers sent to UN peacekeeping missions in Haiti and Liberia in January did not take kindly to the cut.

Their complaint has reached the notice of the United Nations, such that the military has been directed by the Department of Foreign Affairs to explain.

According to Col. Dante Balao, head of the AFP Peacekeeping Operations Center, a "study committee" has found that the military loses as much as P4 million whenever it sends a 165-member contingent abroad for a six-month tour of duty.

Balao told reporters yesterday in Camp Aguinaldo that the AFP was spending to ensure that its troops were in "tiptop condition" when sent to international missions.

He said the expenses covered uniforms, helmets, radios and other personal gear, as well as training seminars and vaccinations worth up to P15,000 per soldier.

Balao said these expenses were shouldered by the Philippine government and not reimbursed by the United Nations.

Not enough

Actually, the United Nations reimburses governments which send peacekeeping missions abroad for Contingent-Owned Equipment (COE), or the heavy equipment brought by their troops.

The United Nations also reimburses governments for the troop cost allowance (TCA), which, in the case of soldiers sent to Haiti and Liberia, amounts to \$1,000 a month each.

But Balao said: "The reimbursement we get from the UN is not enough to cover our expenses."

To enable the AFP to cover its expenses, he said, it decided that each of the 330 soldiers sent to Haiti and Liberia would take a cut in their \$1,000 monthly TCA.

But he would not say how much was taken from each soldier.

The AFP said the monthly TCA would be equivalent to three times the base pay of soldiers, and two and a half times the base pay of officers.

A corporal, the lowest ranking soldier deployed, would receive a monthly TCA of P29,004, or thrice his monthly base pay of P9,668.

Demoralization

In March, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo Jr. reportedly sent a memo to Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. endorsing the "very urgent" recommendations of Ambassador Laroza Jr., the Philippines' permanent representative to the United Nations.

Balao had urged the military to "temporarily hold implementation of the TCA rate reduc-

tions and to pay our deployed peacekeepers their allowances in full to address possible demoralization."

He also recommended that the AFP, DFA and Philippine National Police draw up safeguards to ensure that UN reimbursements were used "to support peacekeeping-related functions."

Balao said he spoke last week with Arthur Corsino, executive director of the DFA's United Nations and International Organizations, and Jesus Domingo, one of the bureau's directors, and explained to them the military's action.

"They have accepted our reasons," Balao said.

Redeployment

In 2000, after a 40-year break, the Philippines again started sending troops to UN peacekeeping missions.

Balao said that in the first few years, the deployments did not hurt the military budget because the COE reimbursements were sufficient to cover the expenses for personnel.

But in recent missions, the costs have exceeded the reimbursements because the military could no longer send heavy equipment abroad, he said.

Again, Balao could not say how much losses were incurred by the AFP in these deployments.

He said the study committee estimated the cost of deploying a 165-member contingent for a six-month mission at P65 million—an amount already including the reduced allowances.

To justify the cut in the soldiers' TCA, the AFP dug up a circular dated Sept. 6, 1950, which states that troops sent abroad are entitled to allowances equivalent to twice their base pay.

'Compensation for RP'

Balao said the TCA was not supposed to go directly to the soldiers, anyway.

"We are correcting our previous error when we thought that the TCA is a direct compensation of the troops from the UN. It's a compensation for the country for sending troops," he said.

According to Balao, Filipino peacekeeping forces should even be thankful because soldiers get a measly P240 a month in combat pay when they are assigned to war zones in the country.

He also said the deployed troops had been briefed on the cut in their TCA.

But an e-mail sent to the INQUIRER by complaining soldiers indicated that they were surprised by the reduced allowance.

The Philippines has deployed a total of 370 troops in six UN peacekeeping missions—in Liberia, Haiti, the Ivory Coast, Burundi, Sudan and East Timor.

It also has a small peacekeeping force in East Timor that is sponsored by the European Union.

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Population growth down to a rate of 1.95%

From page A1

target would boost the Philippines' chances of hitting its poverty-reduction goal over the medium term, he said.

The government has set a target of reducing the proportion of population below the poverty line from 45.3 percent in 1991 to 22.7 percent by 2015.

The latest data from the NSCB showed that as of 2003, the proportion of the population living in poverty stood at 30.4 percent.

Reducing the number of people living in poverty to 22.7 percent of the population was a commitment that the Philippines made under the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.

Unsustainable

Under these goals, UN member-countries pledged to stamp out extreme poverty by 2015.

But Ernesto Pernia, a professor

of economics at the University of the Philippines, said a 1.95-percent annual population growth rate was unsustainable.

He pointed out that it was higher compared with other developing countries in Asia.

Pernia said the Philippines should be able to slow down its population growth rate to as low as 1.6 percent, similar to that of Bangladesh, to be able to meet its poverty-reduction goals.

He described the government's effort to arrest the growing population as "practically nil," and said there had not been enough programs to promote birth control.

In response, Neri said it had been a policy of the national government to entrust population control programs to the local government units.

He said determining appropriate measures to control population growth was up to the LGUs.

With the Philippines dominated by Catholic voters, the government has yet to make a tough stand against population growth and has left it up to couples to choose their preferred method of family planning.

The Philippines is the world's 12th most populous state, according to an Agence France-Presse report.

It said the mid-2006 population was projected at 87 million, putting the country just behind Mexico and ahead of Vietnam.

Within 4 years

"In a span of four years, the country will be populated by over 94 million people. This translates to a yearly population growth of 1.95 percent from 2005 to 2010," Estrella Domingo, officer in charge of the NSCB's office of the secretary general, said in an announcement posted at the board's website.

Domingo said the figure was based on the 2000 census-based national, regional and provincial population projections released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) last April 4.

A report from the NSO projected that the population would grow from 76.5 million, as of the latest population census in May 2000, to 141.7 million in 2040.

"This means that 65 million people would be added to the nation's population between 2000 and 2040, which is a span of 40 years, even if the average annual growth rate is projected to drastically decline from 2.34 percent during the 1990-2000 period to around 1.0 percent during the 2030-2040 period," the NSO said.

FAST FACTS ON PHILIPPINE POPULATION

- 76.5 M The total Philippine population based on the NSO 2000 census
- 38.5 M Total number of males
- 38 M Total number of females
- 15.3 M Total number of households based on the NSO 2000 census
- 5 Average household size
- 2.36 % Average annual growth rate in the 1995 - 2000 period
- 11.8 M Southern Tagalog (Reg IV) total population. Accounting for 15.42 percent of the total population this is the biggest among the country's regions.
- 21 Number of provinces whose population exceeds one million
- 4 Total number of babies born every minute according to the Commission on Population in 2003
- 12th Rank of the Philippines as the most populated country in the world
- 85.2 M Projected total number of Philippine population in 2005, according to the NSO
- 29 Number of years the Philippine population is expected to double

Compiled by: Chona Galang, PDI Research

Sources: National Statistics Office and PDI News Archives

"The population is projected to grow by 1.95 percent in the 2005-2010 period, from 85.3 million in 2005 to 94.0 million in 2010," it said.

Pro-critics

The latest projection on population growth appeared to favor opponents of the Responsible Parenthood and Population Management Act, a consolidated House bill seeking to provide "free and full access to adequate and relevant information on reproductive health and a full range of family methods and devices."

Critics, particularly the Catholic Church hierarchy, have denounced the effort, saying it was merely a sugar-coated piece of legislation that essentially tar-

geted population control.

Others have alleged that some of the measure's proponents stood to benefit from the expected arrival of a "condom" industry in the country should contraception be more aggressively promoted.

At present, contraceptives in the country are basically sourced from foreign donation, particularly from the United Nations Population Fund. Donations are expected to stop by 2008.

A major argument between proponents and critics of population control, as being presented by the government, involves statistics.

Proponents claim the population growth rate is 2.34 percent while critics maintain the figure

is only 1.94 percent.

Curiously, both parties usually base their numbers on the NSCB, the country's policymaking and coordinating body on statistical matters.

In another post titled "For the Record" at its website, the NSCB said the 2.34 percent growth rate was the "average annual population growth rate for 1990-2000 based on actual 1990 and 2000 population census results."

"The latest population projections based on the 2000 census shows that the average annual growth rates for the periods 2000-2005 and 2005-2010 are projected to be 2.05 and 1.94 percent, respectively," it said, adding:

"These values should be interpreted with caution as these are projections based on certain assumptions of fertility and mortality, and are projected annual average growths for the periods given."

"Thus, the estimated 1.94 percent growth is projected as the average annual growth during the period 2005 to 2010. If the growth rate trend is decreasing from the 2.05 percent during the 2000-2005 period, then the 1.94-percent growth rate is likely to be attained around 2007-2008."

Women outliving men

In the latest announcement, the NSCB said Filipino women were expected to outlive men by 5.5 years. But the number of years was less by half than that five years earlier.

"Males (47.3 million) will still outnumber the females (46.7 million)," according to the NSCB.

Poor mom with rich heart adopts unwanted baby

From page A1

trates the continuing battle between the "pro-life" camp, which frowns on contraception or abortion as a means of controlling population growth, and the "prochoice" sector, which advocates a strong information campaign and the availability of family planning methods to couples.

Sally, a community worker of Pro-Life Philippines, firmly believes that poverty does not always strip a child of his/her right to life.

She had heard similar tales of woe while going from house to house, educating couples on natural family planning and responsible parenthood.

"Here, you'll see 14-year-old girls getting pregnant and having no idea of what to do with their child," she said sadly.

Switching places

The mother, a jobless wanderer in the port area, came to Sally in August 2004, two months before she was due to deliver.

The father was nowhere to be found.

"She really wanted to have an abortion but I told her it's wrong," Sally said, recounting the circumstances.

During their conversation, the two women seemed to have switched places. It was Sally who was desperate to keep the child.

"If you really want him, you take care of my pregnancy and the child," the mother said, essentially transferring the "burden to Sally."

Sally agreed, took the teenager in, and arranged for bed space at a nearby lying-in clinic.

From then on, with a "second mother" willing to help her carry the load, the teenager practically breezed through her second pregnancy.

It crossed Sally's mind that the teenager might soon experience an epiphany of sorts. Perhaps, she would regret her attitude and decide to take care of her child.

That was what Sally thought. On Oct. 27, 2004, three days after Sandin Lee was born, his mother disappeared.

Daily survival

The family survives on Salme's P150 daily pay from collecting and selling scraps for a nearby junk shop. Metilyn was recently hired by a sock factory in Quezon City, earning a salary way below the minimum.

The three of them operate on a daily budget not exceeding P50.

In the morning, Sally buys an "order" of a fish dish costing P10 at the *carinderia* next door. The dish is spread for the entire day's meals, as is the kilo of rice Sally usually buys for P22.

Water does not come cheap at P5 for every plastic container. Electricity costs P100 a week for this household that does not have an electric fan.

What did the arrival of Sandin Lee do to the family's daily budget?

"The Lord will take pity," Salme said, apparently finding encouragement from a framed biblical passage hanging on a wall in the shanty: "Never will I leave you, never will

I forsake you (Deuteronomy 31:8)."

Said Sally: "We will never be abandoned by The One up there. I really believe that God will always provide."

Answered prayers

Mother and son's belief are not exactly confined to the metaphysical. Having been with Sandin Lee for nearly two years now, they know their prayers are being answered.

The meager income Salme and Metilyn earn are proving sufficient for the family's, including the baby's, needs.

Sandin Lee never misses on his milk formula (P75 for a box good for three days). His immunization is basically complete at this stage of his development.

In fact, the family managed to throw a small party when he turned a year old on Oct. 24 last year.

There was a cake, *pancit*, bread, and juice generously shared by other kids living in the unfinished Building 3, where the family, along with others, had built their shanty.

Salme even found some balloons in the course of scavenging for scraps.

"There was even a clown!" Salme recalled. "Come to think of it, [rearing Sandin Lee] is not really impossible. It's just a matter of working hard and keeping your faith in God."

Crises

There have been critical moments.

Twice before he turned a year old, the child fell ill—the first time with severe diarrhea and vomiting, the second time with asthma-like symptoms.

Each time, Sally emptied her savings of not more than P700, or borrowed from their similarly impoverished neighbors.

Each time, too, she and her children spent sleepless nights huddled around their little angel.

(Sandin Lee's biological mother showed up lately to perfunctorily check on him. She was with her new boyfriend and pregnant with her third child.)

Sally has only humble dreams for Sandin Lee. She wants him to have a good education and a decent and stable job in the future.

At this point, her priority is to find a way to get him out of their forsaken community.

Moving out

Called "temporary housing" and comprising Happy Land, Helping Foundation and Aroma, the place is a showcase of the permanence of poverty.

There is simply nothing happy about it, or anything to help the residents escape the stench of garbage.

At Building 3, some 200 families, including Sally's family, wake up daily to piles of garbage, vandalized walls, a network of clotheslines, a queue of plastic containers.

The view is occasionally changed when police barge in looking for a thief or a drug addict.

Sally is convinced that the future will not be bright for her baby boy if they stay put.

"We have to move to a better place," she declared.

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Palace won't lift finger to stop 'Da Vinci Code'

By Christine O. Avendaño

A TOP AIDE TO PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo said yesterday the Palace will not lift a finger to stop the showing of the controversial movie "The Da Vinci Code," but if he had his way the movie would not be played in Philippine theaters because it is "blasphemous."

"I don't see how we, as a Catholic nation or as practicing Catholics, would ever tolerate such a plot to be propagated in the name of freedom of expression," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters at his weekly briefing.

Ermita said that while he has not read the best-selling book by Dan Brown, he found the storyline "blasphemous" as told to him by people who have read it.

"All I know it's something (about) our Lord Jesus and Mary Magdalene... Oh my gosh!" Ermita said, stopping in mid-sentence.

"Do you think that's something we should talk about? We might get struck by lightning," he added in Taglish.

The book and now the movie starring Oscar-winning actor Tom Hanks have come under attack from Catholic clergymen and Christian scholars who feel its story line is blasphemous. Both the book and the movie say that Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene were married, establishing a bloodline kept secret through the ages by a clandestine organization that had Leonardo Da Vinci among its members.

Ermita said he was averse to the film because it would cause Filipinos to doubt their faith.

He said the movie would only arouse the curiosity of many "who do not have strong moorings to our faith" and "so it's better for us, as good Catholics or good religious people... to discourage this."

"If you were to ask me ... we being a Catholic country, we should do everything not to allow it to be shown," he added.

Asked if that was the advice he would give the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB), Ermita replied, "I don't want to preempt the MTRCB. They have their own procedures in reviewing motion pictures... let the people judge the MTRCB on this particular issue."

Asked whether he would call for a boycott of the film should the MTRCB approve its showing, Ermita said he would not.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, who also attended the briefing, said he had read part of the book and was "repelled" by it. He said he has not finished reading it because he had no time to do so.

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Uncivil war

IF THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION IS SERIOUS about government reform, why is it politicizing the civil service? The official reason for its change-the-Constitution campaign is to have a more responsive—and ostensibly a more responsible—government structure.

But a mature democracy requires a strong civil service. That strength is defined, in part, as political independence; civil servants must perform their duties in the public's best interest, not according to the political, even partisan, interest of the appointing powers (usually, the Executive).

The Arroyo administration does not seem to understand this, however. From all indications, it is seeking to remake the Career Executive Service into a compliant tier of the government bureaucracy. It wants a responsive government, all right, but responsive to its own agenda.

The latest flashpoint in this war of attrition on career civil servants is the Mafia-like squeezing of the Career Service Executive Board. Consider the following sequence of events:

On March 20, the eight-person CSEB passed a resolution lambasting the "apparent politicization of the career service" by the Arroyo administration. The unprecedented resolution listed at least seven classes of "transgressions" of civil service laws and traditions.

On March 24, or four working days later, the board convened again, but without vice chair Ramon Nieva and member Gerardo Plana. They had been replaced by Malacañang.

On April 18, the board met for the third time, and member Fernando Cui was no longer present. He had been replaced by another Malacañang appointee. The rest were told that member Jarius Paguntalan would be replaced, too.

It looks likely that the next step in this sordid power play is the engineered ouster of Civil Service Commission Chair Karina David as chair of the CSEB. As CSC chair, David is the country's top civil servant. By tradition, the CSC chair serves as CSEB chief. But with half of the members of the CSEB serving only in an acting capacity, David is vulnerable to being voted out of the board. (Not out of the CSC, we must point out, since that is a constitutional office and the chair has a fixed term.)

The state of affairs in the board prompted one board official to complain: "This illustrates how politicized the situation is. President Arroyo has politicized even the CSEB. Any of the new board members can be replaced any time."

Let's think about that for a moment. The government body that oversees the country's career officials is now under the effective control of appointees who do not have a career to speak of. Because they sit only in an acting capacity, they can be removed at any time.

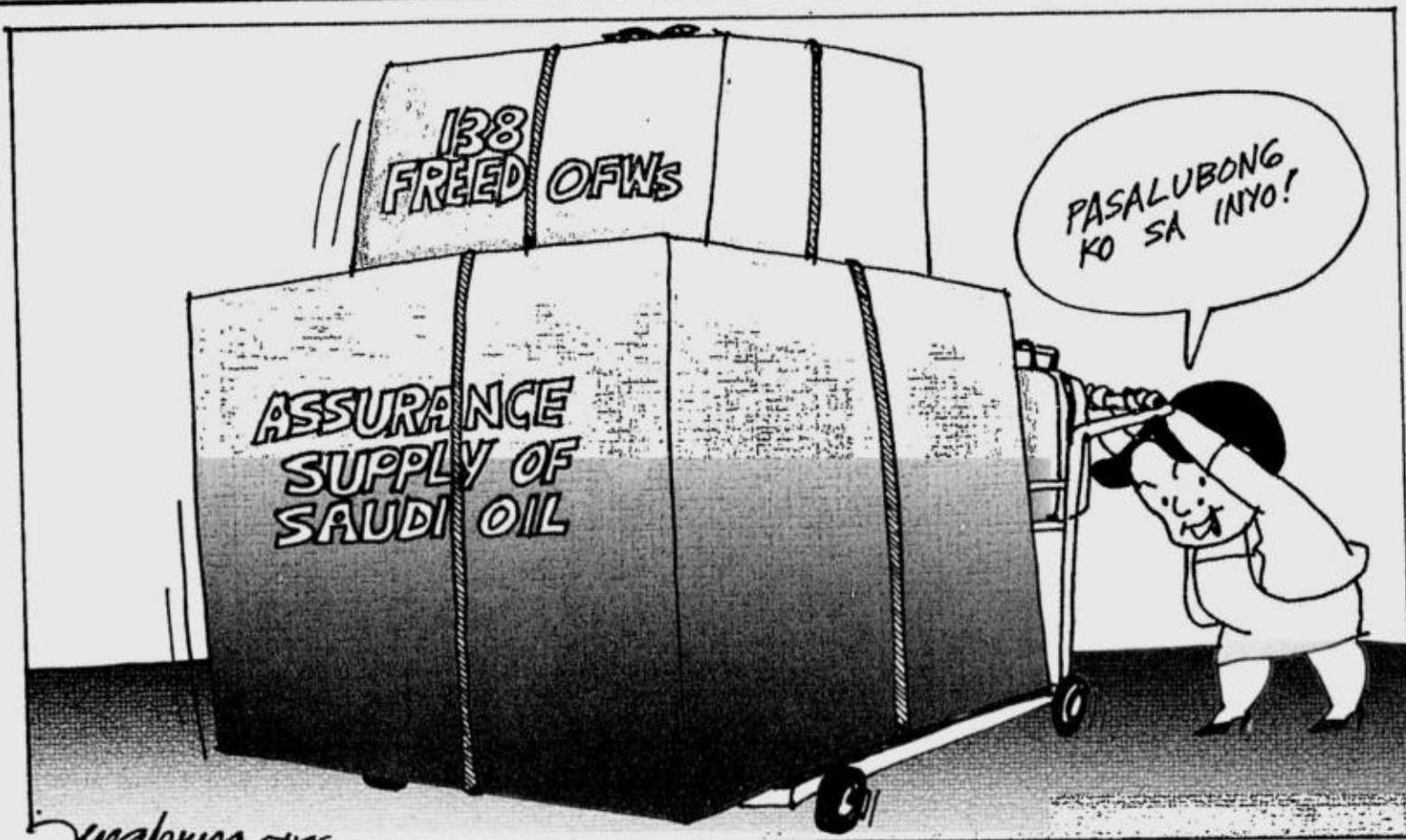
This is an outrage. But this is not an isolated case of government goodfellas applying the pressure on recalcitrant customers. It reflects the pattern the Arroyo administration has set and, in fact, it confirms that pattern.

The March 20 resolution's list of transgressions include career executive service officers (CESOs) being "placed on 'floating' status," "CESOs ... relieved from their CES positions and replaced by non-eligibles," even "CESOs ... relieved from their CES positions and demoted to non-CES positions." Most chillingly, the resolution quotes the chair of the Office of the President's Search Committee as saying that "a non-CES eligible occupying a CES position is considered a political appointee who serves at the pleasure of the President."

There, in the proverbial nutshell, is the whole problem. Contrary to the laws that established our career executive service, Malacañang is following a policy that allows the appointment of non-career officials to career positions, who are then considered to be serving at the President's discretion. The policy cynically subverts the very principle of the career service.

And to what end? The need for greater responsiveness may roll trippingly off the tongue of administration spokespersons, but these spinmeisters are being stingy with the truth. The truth is, career civil servants who take their responsibilities seriously are considered a threat to the administration.

Naturally. They have the public's legal interest at heart.



Clout of the spirit

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado



IN THIS NECK OF THE WOODS, POWER often involves "guns, goons and gold." Assorted pretenders, who claim to rule us, tell us that by their lives.

So, what are we to make of a king who, vested with legal power barely enough to decorate a state dinner, can move his nation by a single word?

"When King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand speaks, his people listen," Asiaweek observed. "Only in extreme circumstances does the King touch the levers of power... But when he does, the intervention is decisive."

Untangle the mess left by the opposition boycott of earlier snap elections called by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, the Thai king told judges in a rare address. On Monday, the court ruled that last month's elections were unconstitutional and ordered fresh polls.

People Power-style rallies earlier, at Sanam Luang and the Democracy Monument in Bangkok, tied up the country. These protested Thaksin's high-handed rule and corruption. His tax-free sale of the 49.6-percent family stake in the telecoms company Shin Corp. to Singapore apparently was the straw that fractured the camel's back.

The king's address jolted the country. "Almost immediately, Thailand's main judicial bodies met to discuss the situation," BBC reported. "Then, in an about-face, the Democrats announced they'd take part in a new election, if the April poll was annulled."

Yet, each rare but critical Palace intervention has tenuous legal anchors at best. When the 18-year-old Bhumibol came to the throne in 1946, he was the ninth king of the Chakri Dynasty, established in the 18th century. Nothing more.

A ceremonial figurehead then, he had "no more power than it took to cut a ceremonial ribbon to open a new highway," Joseph Wright from the University of Michigan points out in his book, "The Balancing Act."

So, where did he get all this clout?

As a United Nations officer stationed in Thai-

land for 17 years, we saw instances of his sway. Away from the press, he told the dictator Thanom Kittikachorn and his cabal that it would be best for the Thai people if they left. They did, on the next flight out.

In 1992, unelected prime minister, Gen. Suchinda Kraprayoon, and his rival Chamlong Srimuang knelt while he told them to stop the bloody fighting. The blood-letting stopped.

He denounced summary executions of alleged drug addicts—a point relevant for death squads in Davao and Cebu. He raised his voice against abuses of Muslim minorities. These were heeded.

Thaksin never revealed what the king told him in a private audience after the Shin Corp. scandal. But he stepped down as prime minister within a week.

Bhumibol today is the world's longest reigning—and arguably the most influential—monarch. For one thing, he didn't lapse into petrified adolescence. "From his earliest days, (the inexperienced, uncertain) king was never content to be the dignified stalking horse for a corrupt power elite," Wright points out.

Over the years, King Bhumibol gave of his time and talents in reaching the poor with programs and projects in the provinces, even as Thai politicians tried to isolate him in the capital. The grounds of Chitlada Palace in Bangkok and other royal homes became agricultural research stations. He put facilities of the Royal Household at the disposal of influential people and funneled their resources for the poor.

In so doing, he "defined a new role for the monarchy by becoming a neutral and transpar-

ent bridge between elite and people," Wright says. He refused to become the powerbroker for factions of the Thai elite and chose "to become a truly universal leader whom no single faction could dominate or oppose."

"It's quite normal that people should use the king," he said in a remarkably candid BBC interview. "But the way of using depends on us also, that we are doing things that are good for the country, and (that) we don't have any secrets."

Transparency and avoidance of self-interest were his keys. Few remember how the young king gingerly tested his right to advise government with suggestions on constitutional reform. Phibul Songkhroan ignored them. In retaliation, Bhumibol left Bangkok on the day he was to preside over ceremonies to promulgate Phibul's constitution. That undercut its legitimacy.

These skirmishes over the years saw the king gradually emerge as an impartial national leader. Impeccable moral credentials underpinned his capacity to lead. He tells us that by his life. "To be honest, as this world goes is to be one man picked out of ten thousand," Hamlet says.

The king is now 79. What worries many (Filipinos, among others) is what happens when this remarkable man goes. "A society can only rush to the brink so often, without going over," Wright observes. "The Thai elite cannot continue to rely on the sort of sudden eleventh-hour resources that King Bhumibol has in the past provided."

Nagging questions of Thai constitutional reform, meanwhile, fester. They have a familiar ring to Filipinos: Thaksin used his position to influence what were meant to be independent bodies, like the Election Commission and the Constitutional Court, the opposition says.

And will Thaksin run again? Thaksin's substantial rural constituency would cheer if he contests the polls again. But that'd infuriate urban voters whose protest marches forced the snap elections.

How will this play out? We asked a Thai friend. He replied with a cryptic Thai proverb: "In the next life—late in the afternoon."

It can be done

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



stitutions, the legal and the pseudo Constitutions, that held sway in this country before and during martial law, that sanctioned snap elections. Yet we had snap elections in January 1986. That is the one area where all that's needed is political will. You have a clamor for snap elections, a roar that is heard around the world, not least in the United States (the Americans were among those who forced snap elections on Marcos), you are going to have snap elections.

More to the point, as Thailand has recently shown, all that's needed is for the Supreme Court to rule that the last elections were unconstitutional and you can have new elections. What made Thailand's last elections unconstitutional was nowhere near what makes our last elections unconstitutional. The Thais never had a recording of Thaksin talking to an election commissioner demanding to win by a million votes against his rival. Our Supreme Court, which has been on a roll, decrees the last elections unconstitutional, we can have new elections.

Snap elections can happen only if GMA resigns? Not at all. Of course, holding snap elections without GMA presumes removing her from the equation to begin with. That can be done by three things: People Power, civil disobedience, military action. I personally favor the first two. The second is the easiest, quite apart from the most logical thing to do, since it does not ask the public to do anything, it asks them not to do anything. Filipinos should find it the easiest thing in the world not to pay taxes since they don't like paying taxes anyway. Filipinos should find it the easiest thing in the world as well not to behave like good citizens because

they don't like being good citizens anyway. Except that in this case, they have every justification for it. Why should anyone want to be a good citizen to a fake president? GMA refuses to go, I refuse to obey.

I've written countless times about why I still believe in Edsa. Edsa never betrayed us, we betrayed Edsa. We did so by believing that after overthrowing a tyrant, we could all go back to where we were and act like battle-scarred veterans. Edsa is not the end, it is the beginning.

I still believe we can mount an Edsa—by having an idea that can inspire the People to reclaim their Power. That is new elections. New elections are not just a thing that can happen after ousting GMA, they are the very thing to oust GMA. They are not just an effect, they are a cause. I've always thought that if the groups opposing GMA had called for snap elections last July, GMA would be gone by now. But no, they called for everything except snap elections, not least snap transitional governments, revolutionary or not, composed by them. Why would people want to take to the streets to install them in power? Might as well stay home and watch the NBA.

As to the Comelec, that too is the easiest thing in the world. All you have to do is prosecute everyone who helped award the computerization program to an illegitimate bidder, and you will revamp that thing completely. All the commissioners then did that: they sat en banc when they awarded the contract to Mega Pacific. If you can force snap elections through an exercise of political will, with everyone from the Supreme Court to the ordinary citizen uniting on that call, you can most certainly force a Truth Commission to come into existence to prosecute everyone who lied, cheated and stole the last elections. And finally, you have a vigilant public, a penitent Namfrel or an independent body that hasn't been afflicted by the virus that makes people unable to count, and an international group to observe the elections, you can have clean elections.

It can be done, and it's high time we did it.

Relative political calm boosted RP stocks

HAVING MISSED SIX COLUMNS OWING TO A family affair I had to attend to, it was a pleasure to read in this newspaper about how Philippine stocks soared to a seven-year high, buoyed by the spending spree of foreign investors. The *INQUIRER* report attributed the surge to "the country's bright economic prospects, improving government finances, solid corporate earnings, low interest rates and relative political calm." I smiled to myself especially when I read that thing about "relative political calm." So many of us in media have tirelessly cited the importance of political stability in economic recovery and now here's proof of what "relative political calm" can do.

We always hear the assertion that the economic picture is vastly improving, but the political situation remains dismal. Recently a pro-administration leader was quoted as opining that political calm would prevail for some time, inasmuch as the espionage case in the US involving several prominent Filipino opposition leaders would keep them off-balance. That wish may be short-lived. Already a big thing is being made in the press of the allegation that then Vice President Macapagal-Arroyo had plotted to oust President Estrada prior to Edsa II.

The good news about the surge of RP stocks is echoed in many bullish reports on the country's economic and financial outlook in the near and medium term from various investment fund companies. Among them is JP Morgan, which noted that in the past six months, 10-year RP bond yields have plunged by 450 bp to 7 percent, compared to the average increase of 12 bp. While RP's equity market lagged behind those of its neighbors in the region, increasing by 25 percent in US dollar terms compared with the regional average of 33 percent, JP Morgan predicted that RP equities "will soon play catch-up, particularly as we are cautious on Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia."

JP Morgan also noted that RP is on track to having a balanced budget by 2008 and a surplus in 2009, "thus breaking the cycle of budget deficits that were continually funded by debt." It said that the national debt is targeted

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



to fall from 82 percent of GDP in 2005 to 51 percent by 2010. These targets will be achieved through an improvement in tax collection from a low of 12.4 percent of GDP in 2004, to 16.1 percent in 2008, new tax measures such as the E-VAT, and better tax administration, the investment firm said.

JP Morgan noted the government's efforts to improve tax collection by implementing the lateral attrition law, whereby underperforming revenue and customs officials are dismissed and performers are rewarded, as well as the more determined effort of the Department of Finance to run after smugglers and tax evaders and prosecute them. What's good about having more funds, besides narrowing down the budget deficit that was once feared to lead to an Argentine scenario, is that there'll be more money to spend on infrastructure projects not only to pump-prime the economy but also to make the country more competitive.

I'll tackle next what JP Morgan terms the "four key growth drivers" for the new RP economic cycle: the strong growth in remittances, business process outsourcing (call centers and allied industries), renewed infrastructure spending and the revitalized mining sector.

Several weeks back, I congratulated Southern Leyte Gov. Rosette Leria for the well-deserved praises heaped on her hands-on management of the mudslide tragedy in Barangay Kinsaugon, St. Bernard. The head of the American service group that assisted in the rescue efforts likened her to former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Unfortunately I had also

written that Rosette learned a lot about governance from her "late" father, former Speaker Nicanor Yniguez. But I was quickly informed later that the former speaker is very much alive, and I have since apologized to his family for that error.

However, former Senate President Jovito Salonga did not let that error pass unnoticed. He wrote Yniguez last March 16 that he read about his "demise" from my column and he recalled their days as practicing lawyers and members of Congress. Yniguez wrote Ka Jovy back to say he was moving in his wheelchair in Maasin, after more than two months of being bedridden in Manila. He also congratulated Salonga for his continued active involvement in the political affairs of the country, recalling his offer to mediate the rift within the Liberal Party as evidence of his concern for a more responsible conduct of politics, especially by major political parties. "I know that your experience in Congress will be of great help to the present political leaders," wrote Yniguez.

Legendary playwright, theater director, Magsaysay awardee for media and saintly priest James B. Reuter, S.J., will celebrate his 90th birthday on May 21. He joins that very exclusive club of people 90 years and above, who have remained prodigiously active in the life of our nation (among them is Fr. Pierre Tritz, founder of Erda Foundation, who will turn 92 on Sept. 19). To celebrate Father Reuter's big day, his former students at the Ateneo, who have formed the 2B3C Foundation, will launch a book that will showcase selected plays and other writings of this enduring talent. Because of the big demand for the book, interested parties are urged to place their orders early so that the organizers can arrange for Father Reuter to write a personal dedication. Orders may be made with Jeng at alumni@admu.edu.ph, Sr. Mary Aurelie Cortes at St. Paul University of Manila, Tel. No. 524-5687 to 89, or Kathy Relevante at St. Paul University of Quezon City, Tel. No. 726-7986, loc. 143. Checks should be payable to 2B3C Foundation until May 15.

Incredible mistake re Sally Bulatao

THIS IS ONE CASE THAT TEMPTS ME TO TELL good persons planning to serve in government to please don't. It has nothing to do with the monetary compensation. It is because despite the hard work you put in, you might end up tarred and feathered, with your name irreparably tarnished.

Sure, one could be removed from an appointive position any time and for any number of reasons, loss of confidence among them, but to be given your walking papers and accused of wrongdoing without due process is another matter.

Something terrible has been done to Salvacion Bulatao, head of the National Dairy Authority (NDA) for almost six years. I am hoping that things will be rectified and that those who moved with undue haste will be enlightened and realize that they have made a mistake.

I've known Sally for 25 years and I can vouch for her good character. I can also say that she has been a great mover in the local milk industry, which includes thousands of farmers. Hey, you don't easily find someone so passionate about milk, dairy farmers and the hungry poor. Sally has, in fact, passed on some of that interest in milk to me. An accounting graduate of the College of the Holy Spirit and with a master's degree from Harvard University, Sally could have been somewhere more comfortable.

Removing Sally is not the problem, but destroying her reputation cries to heaven for reparation. Was this a mistake, or was there malice involved?

On May 2, Sally received a letter of dismissal with punitive measures, consisting of a perpetual ban from public office and forfeiture of all financial benefits. On May 4, a press release and press conference announced the dismissal of corrupt officials. The name Salvacion Bulatao was on the list.

President Macapagal-Arroyo who appointed her NDA administrator in 2001 was the same one who approved her walking papers, through Senior Deputy Executive Secretary Waldo Flores.

The charges against her were: (1) "That in hiring a foreign consultant without the benefit of public bidding as required ... you are liable for vi-

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo



olating ... the Anti-Graft and Corruption Act." (2) "That you failed to observe the procedures of government procurements when you entered into a memorandum of agreement with McCann Erickson Philippines for the advertisement and promotion of local milk, thereby giving a private party unwarranted benefits or preference in violation of ... RA No. 3019."

Sally said that in 2001, when she was new on the job and eager to get things done, she hired a dairy plant expert, a Thai woman whom she knew well, to inspect and evaluate the state of dairy plants. For this decision, she relied on the advice of agency old-timers. This was needed before the signing of lease purchase agreements between the NDA and cooperatives. For 30 days' work, the fee was a relatively measly P75,000 minus tax. The result was reduced power consumption and higher milk quality that resulted from the resizing of ice banks, improved piping system, upgraded procedures, etc.

Two NDA engineers and a dairy farmer were then sent to Thailand to study installation projects. These moves generated savings for the government and increased profits for the dairy enterprises.

McCann Erickson did not charge anything for its creative services in 2002. It was all pro bono. Ogilvy & Mather was pro bono. What the NDA paid for was the production of promo materials that was coursed through the ad agency for friendly rates. The entire package was presented to the NDA board, and the memorandum of agreement covering the transaction was reviewed and recommended for approval by the legal counsel of the Department of Agriculture and

cleared by the Commission on Audit in 2003.

When Sally joined the NDA in 2001, she was not a greenhorn in the dairy industry. In 1988, she joined the Philippine Dairy Corp., the NDA's predecessor. After her stint at the PDC, she helped set up the Dairy Foundation of the Philippines with then Agriculture Secretary Carlos Dominguez as board chair. But long, long before all this, Sally had already gotten her feet wet when she worked with the Federation of Free Farmers. Being married to intellectual and activist Gerry Bulatao meant being drawn deeper toward the disadvantaged.

Sally has served four agricultural secretaries. "I have done my part in moving the industry forward," she says. "This stint in government is already longer than I intended... Hence, the announcement of the Office of the President of my dismissal was not totally unwelcome. After all, as a presidential appointee, I serve at her pleasure. However, I must assert that I am not guilty and the punitive measures imposed on me and the adverse publicity about my dismissal are unfair. I earnestly hope that the appropriate corrective steps will be taken. It is only proper to correct a mistake in the interest of recognizing productive and honest public service."

The 9th National Dairy Congress will be held in Cebu City from May 24 to 26. Sally who was present in the past eight congresses will miss this one.

During the term of Sally (2001-2005), the growth of the dairy sector (number of milk animals, production, farmers involved, farmers' earnings) increased more than 20 percent. There are figures to support this.

When renowned Jesuit psychologist Fr. Jaime Bulatao, Gerry and Sally's uncle, learned about the case, he was incredulous. "This is a mistake," he gaped.

Sally who had bravely stood up to her American counterparts to push Philippine interests just had to let her heart break into pieces on this one.

Tell me, is this the way to treat a good and honest public servant?

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

A unicameralist on bicameralism

JOSE RIZAL ONCE WROTE, "WE MUST COME to our elders for advice. They have seen much and studied more; our years are few and our knowledge scant beside their experience."

The late Jose E. Romero, a former congressman, House majority floor leader, delegate to the Constitutional Convention, sugar lobbyist, secretary of education, lawyer and ambassador, wrote an autobiography entitled, "Not So Long Ago." Every time I read it, I learn something new, and I am reminded of a basic truth that not every politician is a bad person. Romero's account of his life is honest, and illustrates that what we see today had its origins yesterday, and that even at the time, people saw clearly what was at stake. Today's politicians want to bring us backwards, forwards, sideways, with a mixed bag of changes that hark back to all the previous stages of our past. They have no creativity.

I've heard proposals to restore the system of electing senators by district, the way senators were elected under the Jones Law (1916-1935). This idea is, of course, a distraction since what the House really wants is to eliminate the Senate altogether. This happened in 1935, during the framing of the Constitution, but this time, the senators aren't in the mood to have their jobs legislated (or amended) out of existence.

Romero dealt with the issue of senatorial districts in his reminiscences about the role he played in the Constitutional Convention. He wrote, "I was greatly interested in the adoption of the unicameral system of legislature. There was general dissatisfaction with the system of electing senators from the then senatorial districts. Provinces which had very little in common had been lumped together into districts, and there was sometimes an imbalance of resources, making one province dominant over the others. Such was the case of my own senatorial district. My province of Negros Oriental was lumped together with Negros Occidental, distant Antique and still more distant Palawan. It seems as if the district was a hodgepodge of remnants of what could not be taken into other districts. While

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III



we were on the same island as Negros Occidental, we were separated by a high mountain ridge, so that the two provinces did not speak the same vernacular. On the other hand, we were separated by water but were closer and had more contacts with Cebu, Bohol and Northern Mindanao than we had with Negros Occidental, and we spoke the same language. Also, Negros Occidental, being the premier sugar province, was so much richer than ours that candidates from our sister province always had much more money to spend in election campaigns and thereby could practically dominate our province politically ... If we had little in common with Negros Occidental, we had very much less in common with Antique and Palawan."

Of course, his dissatisfaction with the way provinces were lumped together wouldn't hold water anymore. In drawing up the country's different regions, Marcos solved that problem. Romero's old senatorial district would be replaced today by Region 7, composed of Bohol, Cebu, Negros Oriental and Siquijor. He'd probably be happier with this arrangement.

But Romero made other observations about the old system of electing senators at large.

"Senator Briones and Representative [Manuel] Roxas were really in favor of a bicameral legislature with a Senate elected at large, but their strategy was to join the unicameralists in the attack on the then-existing system of electing senators by districts and then afterward to persuade the unicameralists to join them in a movement for a Senate elected at large. Thus, when deliberations on that part of the Constitution dealing with the leg-

islature was about to close after one month of debate, they made their approach to me as the designated leader of the unicameralists' group and made their proposal. I told them that much as I disliked the system of electing senators by district, the system of electing senators at large would be worse. They argued that senators elected at large would be elder statesmen. I told them the senators elected at large would really be only the creatures of the leaders of the parties."

Romero said his misgivings were later proven to be valid. "I was to see an example a quarter of a century later of the truth of my contention when at the Nacionalista convention of 1961, after having been selected by the Executive Committee of the Nacionalista Party as one of the official candidates, Senate President [Amang] Rodriguez insisted on my being replaced by an incumbent senator as a condition for his rapprochement with President [Carlos R.] Garcia, with whom he had been estranged."

But he went on to observe that in retrospect (he wrote his memoirs near the end of his life, and died before he could finish them), maybe the new system had something going for it: "As I have already stated, I was myself an example of the truth of my statement that the senators elected at large would ... not necessarily be the elder statesmen of the country that the proponents expected them to be. But although myself a victim of the system, I can still say that experience has shown there is a good deal to commend the system. Because of the millions of electors involved, as a general rule the better candidates are elected. The influence of money is not decisive in elections at large, whereas if the electorate involved is much smaller, this limited number could more easily be reached by such unwholesome influences as money, personal relations, or even force. In general, the better candidates have better chances of winning elections at large than in local elections."

Romero's words bear reflecting upon as the House attempts to stampee the nation back into the days of his youth.

Out of the box

THE THINGS I OWNED AND KEPT IN COLLEGE WERE packed and arrived in our house two months after I did. They came in huge boxes that were held together by several rolls of packaging tape. My name in big bold letters was written on every side so that if ever the boxes got lost, tampered with or ruined, people would know (although they'd hardly care and God only knows if I'd ever get them back) who owned all the trash and treasures inside them.

YOUNG BLOOD

Michaela June Rom Corpuz

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

It took me a while to open the boxes and reunite with my belongings. When I finally did, four and a half years worth of memories came flooding back and I let myself drown in my emotions. I welcomed the tears that acknowledged a chapter of my life that is over.

When I had freed all of my things from their dark, cramped refuge, I realized that I had kept them out of practicality rather than for sentimental reasons, something I rarely did when I was younger. When I was a child and collecting Sanrio stationery was the fad among fourth graders, I used the ones that I bought for myself and saved those that my friends gave me. I kept the candy wrappers that were left from a one-time trick-or-treat adventure. I refused to throw away stuffed toys ravaged by dust (something I'm allergic to) and old dolls, even the ones whose heads were missing and whose clothes were soiled beyond recognition. I put aside the letters I received in retreats; it didn't matter if some only had "God bless!" written on them, I kept them all the same. Back then, I held on to the smallest things.

One box contained my clothes. I own just enough shirts for last a week or two because I've given away those that have been pushed to the back of my closet and have not seen the light of day for the longest time. Another box held books that I've read many times over and a photo album that hasn't been filled with pictures or mementos of any kind. A huge box contained my bags and my shoes, which were down to only 10 pairs; in frustration over having to clean them and have some of them repaired, I decided to leave most of my footwear, those I could no longer see myself wearing and could no longer restore, on the doorstep of my old apartment for vendors and laundry women to take. Another box had small boxes inside of it in which watches, sunglasses and beaded jewelry were stored. I've kept just the pieces given by the very few people who are special to me. Unlike when I was younger, now I have no qualms about saying goodbye to stuff that hasn't been used for a long while, that is broken or that has missing parts. Never mind that some of the things I parted with had been with me on special occasions, the world didn't stop turning when I bade them goodbye. Besides, I'm ready to make new memories and amass new junk.

The only box whose contents I had difficulty decreasing was the one filled with my college textbooks, photocopied reading materials and papers of all kinds. I didn't want to part with any of my old notes because, who knows, they might be useful someday (i.e., when I apply for and land a job). I don't know if any of the mind-boggling lectures I listened to really have any relevance to the journey ahead, but I like any other new college graduate in this country, I'd save anything that hints of survival in the "real world." Even if the box weighed more than all of the other boxes combined, my dad probably had to pay extra for that, I didn't let go of those materials, hoping they'd somehow help make the future at least a little more conquerable and less terrifying. I realize that though I've changed and I've learned to let go of things, and of people even, I cannot give up my aspirations, and my hope of a bright future. Our government and our economy may be dying, as well as my generation's belief in our country, but I have promised myself to keep my optimism and that is what I will do.

I opened one of my old notebooks and saw doodles I probably wrote out of boredom. Some were pictures of flowers and stars, which are basically the only things I can draw. Some were lists of things I needed to do on a particular day. Some were unfinished verses and thoughts on personal issues. And some were scribbles of my name, in different fonts, with the abbreviation "Atty." at the beginning.

I smiled as I read every page. I recalled old lessons, and my heart was reminded of a dream.

Before April of every year ends, hundreds of students in my old school will march and go up the stage to receive their hard-earned diplomas. I know that most of these students have lived far away from home just to get a good education and will be going back home. Their belongings will be packed in boxes, ready to follow them and remind them of their youthful exploits. While our stories may amuse us and make us yearn for simpler, happier times, I hope that what we will take out of those boxes and never forget are our dreams—for our country and for ourselves—and how we vowed to make them come true.

Michaela June Rom Corpuz, 21, finished Communication Arts at the University of the Philippines Los Baños in October last year, and has since been home in Iligan City. She's set to enter law school to fulfill her childhood dream of fighting for the innocent and the poor.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Ignoring truth

"We pity Mr. (Joseph) Estrada ... he continues to salivate for the presidency and seems to have forgotten or is deliberately ignoring the truth that the Constitution limits him to a single term as President."

—First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo on the possibility of deposed President Estrada running in a snap presidential election

Magical fantasy

"Yes, it's beautiful. But to come up with a product that's beautiful is always a challenge."

—Director Mac Alejandre on the difficulties of doing the telefantasya "Majika"

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Give mining a second chance?

A RECENT SURVEY CONDUCTED by the Social Weather Stations revealed that a little more than half of the country believes that mining should be given a chance. (PDI, 4/28/06) Perhaps, the question should have been phrased "Does mining deserve a second chance?"

In another spell of national amnesia, we are forgetting that we already gave mining a chance to employ and enrich the nation. And, for decades, mining companies were allowed to operate and undertake extraction activities across the country, from the Cordilleras to Mindanao. After those long years of mining, which saw many disasters, among them the Marcopper tragedy in Marinduque, the Filipinos are no richer for their troubles.

To this day, abandoned mining sites dot the countryside, most of them conspicuous for their dead rivers, polluted coastal waters, denuded forests and ghost communities. The original inhabitants of those sites found out too late that mining companies would rather import trained workers than equip lo-

cal residents with the needed skills.

After being given the chance, mining impoverished the country even more. Marinduque is an irrefutable example of mining's ill effects. An island so totally given to mining, it has only become poorer—and worse, poisoned. But despite the experience in Marinduque, the government persists in weaving a fantastic mining tale of riches and prosperity.

The lessons from the Marinduque experience seem to be lost on everyone in the Rapu Rapu mine spill in Albay. Instead of confronting the harsh truths unearthed by an independent commission created to investigate the spill, local officials are accusing its members of being anti-mining.

In its desperate, insatiable drive to rake in more and more money, the Arroyo administration has proposed amendments to the Constitution that would allow 100-percent foreign-owned companies to exploit the country's natural resources and non-Filipinos to own real estate in the Philippines. And the government is di-

verting public attention from these amendments by focusing the debate on the shift to the parliamentary system and on the conflict between the Senate and the executive branch.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines is right in saying mining per se is not bad, but it should not be allowed for now because of the way it is being done in the country today—poorly monitored and regulated even as it gives foreign interests gross advantage at the expense of Filipinos.

Mining was given a chance but it blew it. Instead of the mining companies suffering for their mistakes, Filipinos are the ones being punished. The people need to be reminded of what mining has cost the country. They should not be fooled by empty promises of wealth.

—JAYBEE GARGANERA, national coordinator, Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA), 59 C. Salvador St., Loyola Heights, QC



DILG secretary shows failure of Catholic education

ON HINDSIGHT, I SEE HOW very inadequate and defective was the Catholic education we passed on to Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno. Maybe he should consider making up for the deficiency by following the examples of great personages in history, like Thomas More, Evelio Javier and Rosa Parks.

As for President Macapagal-Arroyo, like many others, I would like to see her go—that is, step down from the presidency. That is the more practical way to resolve the questions about the legitimacy and morality of her leadership and to achieve national unity.

But quite apart from that, she should also look into and ask what she has achieved with her:

(a) Militaristic approach to our insurgency problem in Mindanao and elsewhere.

(b) Economic programs and policies. (Not being an economist, I cannot make an economist's judgment. I go by what my eyes see every day—the rich become richer, the poor, poorer—a human situation which the prophets and Jesus would rail against.)

This is a message for the President and her interior secretary—a message that I would rather not make. But our times demand that we set aside personal feelings, and that we speak up and be counted.

—FR. CARLOS H. ABESAMIS, S.J., Loyola House of Studies, Ateneo de Manila University, Katipunan Road, Loyola Heights, Quezon City 1108

Taiwan seeks to be a partner in world health programs

THE CAUSE OF HEALTH AND sanitation should know no boundaries and no helping hand should be excluded from disease prevention or disaster relief. This is a universally accepted principle.

One of the resolutions adopted by the World Medical Association (WMA) last year reiterated that the health and welfare of the people of Taiwan should no longer be excluded from the international community's pursuit of global health.

In a speech last year, WMA president Dr. Kgosil Letlape warned: If avian flu is transmitted from China to Taiwan, as happened with SARS, there will be no formal channels by which the World Health Organization and Taiwan can exchange technical data and assistance. Clearly, as social leaders, we need to be more vocal and active in ensuring that all necessary measures are adopted to involve all the peoples of the world in preparing for health disasters.

To live up to the expectations of our friends and to heed sugges-

tions here and abroad, we have organized the Taiwan International Health Action (Taiwan IHA) to integrate our domestic medical resources, and to coordinate our health and sanitation initiatives with international cooperative efforts to provide humanitarian medical aid.

Taiwan IHA seeks to establish partnerships with important domestic and international health service and sanitation groups. Taiwan IHA is envisioned to serve as the platform for the nation's active participation in international health and sanitation affairs.

Taiwan is willing to establish medical partnerships with other countries worldwide. Taiwan IHA will spearhead attempts to achieve this goal. As Taiwan works to gain participation in the WHO, these partnerships will naturally merge with our goal of working for global health. We hope that Taiwan IHA will make our nation a true partner for global health.

—HOU SHENG-MOU, minister of health, Taiwan

'TV Patrol' vs '24 Oras': which news program is No. 1?

THIS REFERS TO THE ARTICLE titled, "In Mega Manila, it's still 24 Oras," written by Nini Valera and Bayani San Diego Jr. (PDI, 5/7/06) We would like to clarify some points in the article.

Luchi Cruz-Valdez reportedly claimed that "TV Patrol," on the average, led "24 Oras" in ratings for the month of April in Metro Manila. Valdez, citing the Metro Manila ratings of "TV Patrol" vs. "24 Oras" for the period April 19 to 21 (only), made the conclusion that "TV Patrol" led "24 Oras" for the entire month.

Based on data from AGBNMR, during the entire month of April, "TV Patrol" led "24 Oras" in Metro Manila just for five times and in three of those wins, "TV Patrol" led by less than one rating point. To claim that "TV Patrol" "won" the month on the whole is totally incorrect and irresponsible.

For the month of April, "24 Oras" registered an average of 25.6

points vs. "TV Patrol's" 20.4 points in Mega Manila, and posted an average of 23.5 points vs. "TV Patrol's" 22.3 points in Metro Manila, based on data from AGBNMR.

From May 2 to 4, "24 Oras" even increased its Mega Manila ratings as it beat its rival program by 11 points or more, based on overnight ratings data from AGBNMR. Last May 5, "24 Oras" led "TV Patrol" by almost 8 rating points.

Breaking down Mega Manila ratings into Metro Manila and suburbs has never been a common practice in the industry, GMA Marketing and Productions president Manuel Quiogue said. Very few clients look at the Metro Manila ratings because Mega Manila represents one major market and not a collection of many markets.

While our competitor claims they now have a higher credibility rating, we stand by ratings data to prove that viewers prefer our unbi-

ased newscasts, particularly in times of significant events like the May 1 Labor Day coverage, the stand-off at the Marine headquarters last Feb. 26, the Feb. 24 declaration of a state of national emergency, the landslide in Southern Leyte and the events that led to the "Hello Garci" controversy last year.

Whatever the reasons behind Valdez's claims, we know that these false statements only mislead the public.

We believe that our continuous success in news and public affairs has always been due to our firm commitment to deliver accurate and responsible news and information without spins and agenda. It has never been part of our core values to make false statements to capture the attention of the viewing public.

—BUTCH S. RAQUEL, head, Corporate Communications, GMA Network Inc., Quezon City

Haven for investors and tourists

KUDOS FOR PUBLISHING THE articles, "OFWs in UK, US, queens in Pangasinan," (PDI, 3/26/06), "Blade maker cashes in on sword-and-sandal flicks" (PDI, 3/31/06) and "Getting donors from abroad like a walk in the park," (PDI, 4/9/06) all datelined Pozorrubio, Pangasinan by Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau correspondent.

The three articles contributed immensely to the promotion of our town as an investment site and tourist destination. However, the correct name of our mayor is Artemio Q. Chan, not "Arterio."

Also, the construction of the Friendship Park in our town plaza was spearheaded by the wife of the mayor, Emma T. Chan, the chair of the project for the beautification of our town plaza. I also would like to cite the role of OFWs

in the town's upliftment and improvement. This OFW contribution has been recognized by The Philippine Star's Max V. Soliven in one of his columns.

Among the additional projects accomplished with OFWs' financial assistance are the renovation of the one-of-a-kind plaza pergola of Pozorrubio, the Multi-Purpose Social Hall, the newly constructed Sangguniang Bayan Building and the three-story Executive Building (Municipal Hall) costing P27 million (now under construction). This unprecedented financial assistance shows the OFWs' confidence in the present local leadership.

—HERIBERTO A. BAUTISTA, municipal consultant, Office of the Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Pozorrubio, Province of Pangasinan

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Priests condemn STL as front for 'jueteng,' 'archaic social evil'

LAOAG CITY—PRIESTS IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF Laoag have condemned the resurgence of "jueteng" in Ilocos Norte, which, they said, is being operated under the protective mantle of the government-run Small Town Lottery (STL).

The priests, through a pastoral letter read in all Catholic parishes in Ilocos Norte on May 7, said "since there was no valid argument for jueteng, this archaic social evil is now called STL."

It was the first occasion that the priests had publicly rebuked the STL even as no local franchise had been approved for its operation.

"As we were contemplating on amending our old and evil ways during Lent, the government was busy contemplating on amending the name and mechanics of an old and tempting evil. And as we were celebrating the resur-

rection (of the Lord), the government shamelessly took the front pages, gladly announcing the resurgence of a social evil that we all thought has died forever," said the pastoral letter.

While there has been no application for STL franchises, the Ilocos Norte provincial board has started deliberating on a measure supporting the STL's operation.

The board said the lottery would improve the revenues of local government units out of shares derived from bets.

Ilocos Norte mayors are known to be sup-

portive of the state-run gambling. However, not all mayors showed up during a public hearing that Board Member Renato Peralta convened to support the STL measure.

Reports reaching the provincial police showed that collectors have resumed soliciting jueteng bets in nearly all Ilocos Norte towns and this capital city.

Supt. Juan Luna, provincial police director, however, said "the bet collection might be a test-run for the STL."

Laoag Mayor Michael Fariñas, who had supported the entry of STL, said the bet collection must be stopped if it is intended for jueteng operators.

"STL or jueteng or both, we condemn it. We also condemn the carefree enthusiasm of the government in promoting the STL. We condemn the utter disregard, indifference and si-

lence of our local authorities in allowing the vicious ploy of shrouding the illegality of jueteng within the legality of STL," the priests said.

The priests reminded authorities that they could stop illegal gambling if they want to, citing past instances when jueteng operations stopped.

In Pangasinan, police suspected that jueteng operators in the province were using the numbers game EZ-2, run by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, as a front for illegal gambling.

Eleven collectors, supposedly soliciting bets for EZ-2, were arrested by the police on Tuesday in San Jacinto and Urbiztondo towns and Urdaneta City. *Cristina Arzadon and Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

ROUNDUP

Wire thieves nabbed

CABUYAO, Laguna—Police arrested on Saturday 10 suspects, most of them Metro Manila residents, for the theft of telephone wires owned by the Philippine Telegraph and Telephone Company (PT&T). Investigators said a PT&T lineman spotted the suspects cutting the wires at about 11 a.m. in Barangay Mamatid here and immediately reported them to police. The suspects, who have been detained at the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Cabuyao, were identified as Michael T. Abiso, Marcelino B. Malones, Ricardo D. Trespeces, Jr., all residents of Parañaque City; Rocky S. Dalanido and Peter P. Baldonado of Sampaloc, Manila; Primo S. Bangut, Allan P. Bernal and Bryan P. Bacang of Ugong, Valenzuela City; Milan C. Niempido, of Gentillon, Valenzuela City and Arman S. Sumilo of Quezon City.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Kaogma Festival

CAMARINES Sur Gov. Lray Villafuerte said everything is set for this year's Kaogma Festival, which will be held from May 21 to May 28 as the highlight of the province's 427th foundation day celebration. The Kaogma Festival was started in 1989 to highlight the celebration of Camarines Sur's foundation day and also as a thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest for the year for the province's farmers and fisher folk. "We would like to extend this invitation for this year's Kaogma Festival, which we have billed as the 'hottest festival' in the world," said Villafuerte in a statement. "There will be spicy and delicious food which the province is known for, cultural presentations and sporting events. We will also be showcasing our local products."

Anti-pilferage seminars

TRANSCO, formerly the National Power Corp., has conducted anti-pilferage seminars for its employees, especially those who work in the field such as linemen, line foremen, field officers and security personnel. A Transco press statement said the seminars seek to improve the knowledge and skills of the employees in enforcing the law against stealing or destroying power towers. The seminars were held in Naga, Camarines Sur on April 21, Lipa, Batangas on March 22, and Guimaca, Quezon on March 21.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

70 dogs rescued

BIÑAN, Laguna—Police rescued 70 caged dogs illegally kept by Arnold F. Aguilar, 35; Ely S. Medina, 18; Max D. Quilag, 31; and Rian S. Medina, 29, all residents of Barangay San Roque, San Pedro, Laguna. The dogs were found in six cages in an operation on May 5 at the suspects' lair in Sitio De La Paz Beach, Biñan. The suspects were detained at the Biñan Municipal Jail for violation of Republic Act No. 8485 or the Animal Welfare Act of 1998 while the animals were turned over to Mel Alipio of the Network for Animals.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Missing girl in Paete

PAETE, Laguna—Police said Mariel Ramos Reyes, 13, a Grade 5 pupil of Paete Elementary School of Barangay Uno, Paete, has been missing since May 4. Relatives described the child, who is suffering from mental disability, as 5 ft. 4 in. tall, with short straight hair, fair skin and medium-built. She was last seen wearing a blue T-shirt, short pants and slippers. Police are requesting the public to relay information about the missing child through telephone Nos. (049)557-0889 or the Paete Municipal Police Station.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Missing employee

STA. CRUZ, Laguna—Police have raised the alarm for a 24-yr-old male employee, who has been missing since May 2 here. Raymond B. Joven, 24, a credit investigator of Trio Motorbike Kawasaki of Monserrat Subdivision, left his home at Barangay Sto. Angel Sur, Sta. Cruz at about 10 a.m. in his yellow motorcycle with license plate DQ 2147. Any information on Joven, who was last seen wearing a yellow long-sleeve sweatshirt, may be relayed to the Sta. Cruz police or his father SPO3 Angelito Balmes Joven through his mobile phone numbers 0927-519-9969 and 0920-439-2033.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



PLAYING WITH DOVES

Six-year-old Judith and her elder brother Joshua, 10, have fun chasing doves outside the San Pedro Cathedral in Davao City.

DENNIS JAY SANTOS/PPM MINDANAO BUREAU

UP prof says no proof of heavy metal in Sorsogon

SORSOGON CITY—The head of the University of the Philippines-Manila (UP-Manila) Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology had assured Sorsogon officials that there is no scientific proof that heavy metals are present in the body of residents of five towns earlier subjected to a study by their group.

The assurance was relayed by Dr. Nelia Cortez-Maramba to Dr. Edgar Garcia, Sorsogon provincial health officer, who called on her at her office

to discuss the issue, following reports quoting the UP professor as saying that residents of five Sorsogon towns were positive of heavy metals.

Maramba told the Sorsogon official that she was misquoted by reporters as she had not given the independent commission, which was investigating the Lafayette mining operation, any conclusive testimony when she was summoned to testify.

Garcia said the UP professor's as-

surance would allay any fears that the report could generate, particularly a possible fish scare it might again cause.

"We must be very careful about this issue as we don't want any repeat of the fish scare which would surely cripple the livelihood of our already poor fishermen," he said.

Garcia was sent to Manila by Gov. Raul Lee to see Maramba so he could clarify the issue. *Bobby Q. Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

GSIS stops loans to gov't men in Bulacan town

PAOMBONG, BULACAN—THE GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System has suspended the loan privileges of local government employees here after the town failed to pay compulsory premium arrears to the state pension fund.

In a statement, GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia said the employees would not be able to apply for loans until the arrears were settled or an arrangement for a settle-

ment had been approved by the GSIS.

"We are open to settlements, but [local officials] have to enter into formal and binding agreements with the GSIS that they will settle their obligations," Garcia said.

According to the statement, GSIS senior vice president Felicidad Gutierrez said the suspension of loan privileges of Paombong employees was made effective on April 11 after notices were sent to

the town officials.

Mayor Donato Marcos said a reason for the delay in payment of GSIS premiums was the non-payment of rentals and taxes of big fishpond operators in the town.

Marcos said he was surprised when he learned about the suspension of GSIS loan privileges of local government employees because they did not receive any notice from the GSIS. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

PNP building 'stronger' stations vs rebs

PAGADIAN CITY—THE SERIES OF SUCCESSFUL attacks of rebels on police stations in many parts of the country has prompted the Philippine National Police to speed up its modernization program by building "strong" stations.

Police Director Servando Hizon, chief of the PNP's Directorate for Comptrollership, announced that the PNP is building 250 police stations across the country, especially in areas threatened by insurgency.

"All police stations will be provided with their own buildings and will be adequately equipped with all necessary equipment such as short and long firearms, patrol cars, troop carriers as well as communication and in-



vestigating facilities," said Hizon, who was here Tuesday for the groundbreaking rites of a P10-million police headquarters at the city hall complex.

In Western Mindanao, a spokesperson of the National Democratic Front claimed that its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), had seven successful raids since last year, including the raids on the municipal police station of Sapang Dalaga town in Misamis Occidental.

Hizon on Monday attended the inauguration rites of a newly built P2-million municipal station in Roseller T. Lim town in Zamboanga Sibugay and attended four other groundbreaking ceremonies in the towns of Zamboanga del Norte and Sibugay.

"These projects are aimed at making police stations stronger," Hizon said. *Michael Sarcauga, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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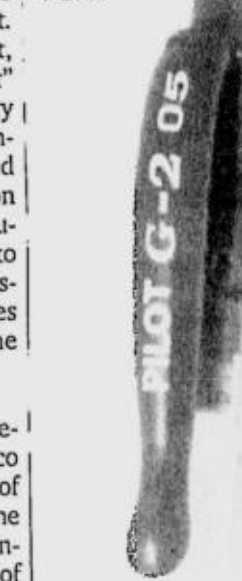
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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandyrel
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Pit bulls bred for fighting in Camarines Sur Illegal dog trading uncovered in Albay

By Edgar Alejo and Job Belen
Legazpi City

ON MARCH 31, Police and officials of the Animal Kingdom Foundation Inc. (AKFI) arrested a dog trader in a buy-bust operation in Tabaco City in Albay.

Senior Insp. Nelson Llaneta, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) in the province, said Ernesto Arabe, alias Erning "Ayam" (local term for dog), 42, of Purok 2, Barangay Divino Rostro, Tabaco, was arrested at 7:30 a.m. at the old public market on Juan Luna Street, some 300 meters from City Hall and the police station.

Llaneta said at least five dogs were ready to be slaughtered and a dead one was found in the possession of Arabe.

The dogs were confiscated and brought to the city pound in Barangay San Roque for temporary shelter. They were later transferred to the AKFI Rescue Center in Capas, Tarlac.

Greg Quimpo, an AKFI researcher, uncovered the dog trading activities when he posed as a buyer and ordered 10 dogs, one of which was already slaughtered.

Two days earlier, Quimpo left P1,500 as deposit to Arabe and promised to pick up the animals early morning of March 31.

Charged

Arabe was released after police investigation but faced charges of violation of Republic Act No. 8485, or the Animal Welfare Act of 1998. If found guilty, he could face a penalty of P1,000 fine, plus



POLICE and animal rights advocates rescue these dogs after a buy-bust operation in Tabaco City last March 31.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

imprisonment of not more than six months, Llaneta said.

AKFI president Charles Wartenberg, who was with the raiding team, expressed concern over the animal welfare law, which dog traders have ignored until now.

Wartenberg said they were against the indiscriminate transport of dogs. At least 70 percent of dogs being transported die due to suffocation, he said.

"They (dogs) are not only being transported with tied mouths but more so, placed on board the trucks with narrow iron framing that extremely restrains their movements," Wartenberg said.

40 operations

The AKFI, a charitable organization under the England-based

International Wildlife Coalition Trust, is registered with the Animal Welfare Division of the Bureau of Animal Industry. It is engaged in the investigation of illegal dog trading in the country as it seeks to protect the animals from abuse and violence.

So far, it has discovered some 40 dog trading operations all over the country since it was established in 2001.

The CIDG arresting team led by Llaneta was also accompanied by AKFI trustee Alan Whittaker, veterinarian Dr. Winston Samaniego, and officer in charge Susan Llaneta.

At the time of Arabe's arrest, the city government was undertaking a massive dog vaccination in line with its anti-rabies campaign. The vaccination started in Barangay Salvacion.

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Camarines Sur

WITH A HUNDRED thousand pesos gambled on the table by an emerging group of pit bull breeders, two pit bulls fight like gladiators inside a plywood-boxed arena inside a cockpit somewhere in Camarines Sur.

The rule is simple in this new type of game: The canine who gets maimed or is killed, or turns his back on a fight loses while the one that delivers the fatal attack or blow wins.

The combatants use the raw savagery of predators against their own kind, acquired through specialized breeding techniques that involve maintaining body weight and fighting form and adhering to a special diet, which some say, includes steroid injections.

The killer instinct is harnessed in a controlled and regimented environment.

Typically people-friendly, pit bulls become rabidly aggressive against each other in this kind of setup. Unlike fighting cocks armed with blades attached to their spurs to maim and kill, pit bulls use jaw power to lock the neck or throat of their opponents, grab the testicles or break their legs.

Ritualistic

Ostensibly, the dog fight is more "ritualistic" or "ceremonial" than the traditional cockfight.

The pit bulls are presented one after the other. The dog with the lower bet is presented first.

Fighting dogs must be bathed before combat, but they are not required to be present in the arena before the match. The favorite is privileged to be in the arena and wait for its opponent after presentation.

Betting rules are the same as in a cockfight. Outside table betting starts as soon as the favorite is brought in.

There are no fixed rules on fight duration. As long as the pit bulls are still fighting and neither one is running away, the game continues until one dies or the breeder-owner decides to surrender.

A referee calls for a break after 30 seconds of stationary position or situational deadlock, like when both animals lock jaws on each other's hides without moving.

To continue the fight, the dogs are secured to their corners by the two handlers who are allowed to guide them while the fight progresses. The referee counts to 30 to allow the pit bull with the lower bet to make the first charge. Should the dog fail to show a fighting stance and instead act submissively, the referee can

Animal rights activists raise alarm

GREG QUIMPO, AN ANIMAL rights activist, who works as an animal researcher at the Animal Kingdom Foundation Inc., said the dogfight is illegal.

Animal Kingdom is an advocacy group pushing for the enforcement of Republic Act No. 8485 or the Animal Welfare Act of 1998 that protects animals, specifically dogs, from cruelty.

The group has been working with government law enforcement agencies in unraveling the dog trade in Northern Luzon.

Quimpo was alarmed when told of the apparently secretive operation of the pit bull fight that involves big-time gamblers.

Penalties

"The problem is, the law only provides six-month imprisonment or payment of a minimum of P1,000 to a maximum of P5,000 penalty to those caught," he said.

Even if the gamblers are caught, they would easily be able to pay the penalty, which is lower than their capital or winnings, he said.

Quimpo added that even as dogfight aficionados claim that the game is likened to boxing to rationalize the use of raw power in the game, the dog has no option but to face death inside the arena, and that constitutes cruelty.

"Dogs should not be procured and submitted to torture. This constitutes a crime punishable by law," he said.

Juan Escandor Jr.

declare its defeat.

Fight to death

The dogfight, which many condemn as bloody and inhumane, is a fight-to-death game that is gaining followers in Camarines Sur.

One or two exclusive loose groups of breeders already exist in at least three provinces of Bicol and they have set up networks with regional and national groups of breeders.

The breeders cash in on pit bull breeds with pedigrees of fighters for at least P2,500 for a weaned pup or they can spend P1,500 service fee for a male pit bull breeder to mate with a female breeder.

Maintenance and fight conditioning cost more than those for gamecocks.

IN THE KNOW

Pit Bull

AMERICAN Pit Bull Terriers, Bull Terrier Dogs, Pit Bull Terriers, or simply pit bulls (*Canis familiaris*), are medium-sized dogs known for their aggressive demeanor, strength and high pain tolerance. Originally bred for use in dogfights, they are more commonly seen today as companion animals.

With an average life span of 12 years, they can reach a height of 18-22 inches and weight of 30-70 pounds at maturity. They are short, thickly built dogs with powerful square jaws and

short, shiny coats. Pit bulls are a controversial dog breed because they can be extremely dangerous, especially when trained as attack or fighting dogs. Defenders of pit bulls have maintained that these dogs are no more dangerous than other large dog breeds, and that this nasty reputation is due to irresponsible owners.

However, the animals are generally not recommended as pets for novice dog owners.

As athletic and energetic dogs, pit bulls need exercise frequently. Early training is also a must.

Kate Pedrosa, PDI Research



PHOTO FROM WWW.ANIMALKINGDOM.COM

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Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF PEZA FORMS (2nd & 3rd Quarter 2006)

- The PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY (PEZA), through its Corporate Budget for the CY 2006 intends to apply the sum of PNP 2,663,436.71 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Supply and Delivery of PEZA Forms. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
- The PEZA now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the following GOODS:

PARTICULARS	QUANTITY (RDS)
Form No. 8101 - Import Permit	6,875
Form No. 8104 - Export Tally	8,300
Form No. 8105 - Application for Permit to Bring Goods from the Customs Territory into the Zone	5,200
Form No. 8106 - Application for Permit to Bring Goods from the Zone into the Customs Territory	11,600
Form No. 8110 - Application to Withdraw Goods from the Zone for Sample Purposes	1,100
Form No. 8112 - Application for Permit to Sell Ecozone Made Goods Within the Ecozone	1,660
Authority to Withdraw Boat Notes	4,785
	6,235

Delivery of the GOODS is required within thirty (30) calendar days from the date receipt of the Notice to Proceed. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

- Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a single similar project within the last three (3) years with an amount of at least 50% of the ABC. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
- Interested Bidders may obtain further information from PEZA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.
- A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from 11 to 26 May 2006, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays from the address below upon submission of a certified copy of a DBM-GEPS Certification as a registered supplier/contractor and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Two Thousand Pesos Only (PNP 2,000.00). The method of payment will be on a cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
- The PEZA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on 01 June 2006 2:00 p.m. at the 6th Floor, Social Hall, PEZA Building III, Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City.
- Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 11:00 a.m. of 15 June 2006. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of GSIS Surety Bond in the amount of not less than 2.5% of the ABC or in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit in the amount of not less than 1% of the ABC. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
- Bid opening shall be on 15 June 2006 at 2:00 p.m. at the 6th Floor Social Hall, PEZA Bldg. III Roxas Blvd. corner San Luis St., Pasay City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
- In case any of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.
- The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
3/F PEZA Building III Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City.
Tel. No. 001-6444 / Telefax No. 551-9507
e-mail: peza_bac_secretariat@yahoo.com website: www.peza.gov.ph

THE CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Republic of the Philippines
6CB-GSC-016

PURCHASE OF VARIOUS OFFICE SUPPLIES

(Name of Project)

545 items of different office supplies (pls see details @ www.gensantos.gov.ph and also @ www.procurementservice.gov)

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City, through the CY 2006 Annual Budget intends to apply the sum of Three Million Two Hundred Fifty Three Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy Three Pesos and 33/100 (P3,253,873.33) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Various Office Supplies. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Purchase of Various Office Supplies. Delivery of the GOODS is required by the 30 calendar days. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Local Government Unit of General Santos City and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000.00 to the City Treasurer's Office. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested on May 16, 2006, 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon at the BAC Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon of May 30, 2006. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit equivalent to One Percent (1%) of ABC or Bank Guarantee equivalent to One and a half Percent (1½%) of ABC or Surety Bond Equivalent to Two and a half Percent (2½%) of ABC or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon of May 30, 2006 at the BAC Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Bids and Awards Committee
2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City
Tel. No. (083) 301-0553, (083) 301-3834
Fax (083) 301-0553
website address: www.gensantos.gov.ph

(Sgd.) NAEL JOSEPH D. CRUSPERO
BAC Chairman

(PDI - May 4 & 11, 2006)

Quake blacks out Central Visayas for 7 hours

From page A1

was recorded at magnitude 3 in Ormoc's city center and 4.2 in Barangay Tongonon nearer its epicenter.

Quake's epicenter

The quake was caused by a movement of a geological abnormality in the Philippine Fault that is straddled by Leyte island, Phivolcs said.

The institute said the earthquake was land-based, with no tsunami expected.

The fault was blamed for a massive landslide on Feb. 17 that buried the village of Guinsaugon in Southern Leyte, killing about 1,000 people. A 2.6-magnitude quake hit Southern Leyte just before the landslide.

'Ring of fire'

The Philippines is part of the Pacific "Ring of Fire," where earthquakes and volcanic activities are frequent.

The quake blacked out Cebu City, the country's No. 2 metropolis, Leyte and Samar islands, and also affected large areas of Cebu, Negros, Bohol and Panay islands.

Geothermal plants

The country's major geothermal plants in Leyte supply much of the energy to the six islands which are interconnected by submarine cable in the Visayas power grid.

The grid's main power supplier are generation plants located in Barangay Tongonon which account for 45 percent of overall generation capacity.

Officials said power was cut off as a safety precaution but was restored in some areas at around 1 p.m. Power returned to the rest of the region at about 6 p.m. yesterday.

Automatic shutdown

"For earthquakes with magnitude of 3.5 or higher, the [government] shuts down its plants as a precautionary measure," said Glen Rabonza, administrator of the Office of Civil Defense.

SC chief fears rise of greedy legal eagles

From page A1

and secondarily only to their clients," Panganiban said.

"Worse, they have jumbled up the hierarchy of their responsibilities to mean their interests first, the interests of their clients second, and the interest of justice a far third."

Ethical compass

Panganiban stressed the need for all lawyers to strictly adhere to the Canons of Professional Responsibility.

He reminded them of the constant exhortations of the late Justice Jose BL Reyes for lawyers to "keep their souls attuned to the demands of morality and honor, since a just cause cannot be protected or defended by dishonorable means."

"Indeed, an ethical compass is required of those who wish to reach the pinnacle of this noble vocation," Panganiban said.

"Quality justice always begins with ethics. Without sound and firm ethical moorings to anchor the profession, attorneys are bound to drift in a vast sea of professional uncertainty and even of personal degeneracy."

46 judges fired

Court records from 1999 to 2005 show that 28 lawyers had been disbarred for various offenses, 169 suspended, 63 reprimanded, 60 admonished, five censured and 10 warned.

During the same period, the high court also dismissed 46 judges from the service and suspended 41 others for various violations.

In his speech, Panganiban praised the bar topnotchers led by 25-year-old Joan de Venecia of the University of the Philippines

Service from one of the three power plants has been restored and power was expected to be back across the central islands before the end of Wednesday, Ortiz said.

"Maybe some power lines moved, causing the power outage, but the earthquake was not powerful enough to expect damage," said Phivolcs's Ric Mangao.

Powerful enough

But, according to Alberto Dangaso, the Ormoc-based principal engineer of Transco, the quake was powerful enough to disturb the system, causing the tripping of a power generation plant of the California Energy Corp., an independent power producer, and Leyte geothermal power plant of National Power Corp.

The two plants located in Tongonon supply the power needs of the entire Visayas region. The CEC has a capacity of 525 megawatts while the Napocor plant has 105 megawatts.

Moses Red, Napocor-Visayas corporate staff specialist, said that immediately after the power supply from Leyte was cut off, all the power generation plants operated by Napocor in Cebu, Negros, Panay and Bohol also automatically shut down.

Intensity 3 earthquakes are classified by Phivolcs as "weak." People can feel them indoors, particularly on the upper floors of a building.

'Moderately strong'

Intensity 4 earthquakes are classified as "moderately strong," and are felt by most people indoors and outdoors and can even rouse those who are asleep.

Two other earthquakes hit Ormoc earlier this year, a 3.3-magnitude quake on March 22 and a 2.4-magnitude tremor on March 9.

The blackout disrupted work and commercial activities in many offices and business establishments across the Visayas, the cost of which has yet to be

quantified.

Cebu offices close

In Metro Cebu, the blackout forced government, including the courts, and many private offices to close at noon.

Traffic was disrupted with traffic lights out. Residents flocked to the malls, straining the latter's air-conditioning systems which were operating with power generators.

Hotels and resorts suddenly experienced a surge in occupancy as residents tried to escape the heat. *Reports from Blanche S. Rivera, Abigail L. Ho and LJ Pasion, Metro Manila; and Joey Gabieta, Jhunnex Napalacan, Vicente Labro, Jani Arnaiz, Carla Gomez and Irene R. Sino Cruz, PDI Visayas Bureau, with AP and AFP*



CANDLE lights up home of a family in Cebu.

CDN PHOTO/JUNIE MENDOZA

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Agribusiness Investment Forum for Luzon-Mindanao-Visayas
WTC SEMINAR AREA
FREE

MAY 13 10:00am - 2:00pm
2:30pm - 5:30pm

Requirements and Processes for Supplying to Consolidators and Supermarkets
IFEX SEMINAR AREA
PHP 250.00

Updates on the Rules and Regulations on Food Labeling (US, EU, and Canada)
WTC SEMINAR AREA | PHP 150.00

Waste Management and Techniques for the Food Processing Sector
WTC SEMINAR AREA | PHP 150.00

MAY 14 10:00am - 6:00pm

Business Opportunities for OFWs, Filipino Expatriates, and their Dependents (USA, Middle East, and Japan)
IFEX SEMINAR AREA
PHP 60.00

MAY 15 9:00am - 6:00pm

The Global Challenge of Food Safety and Regulatory Compliance: Market Access Strategy to China and Korea
PHILIPPINE TRADE TRAINING CENTER Hall B
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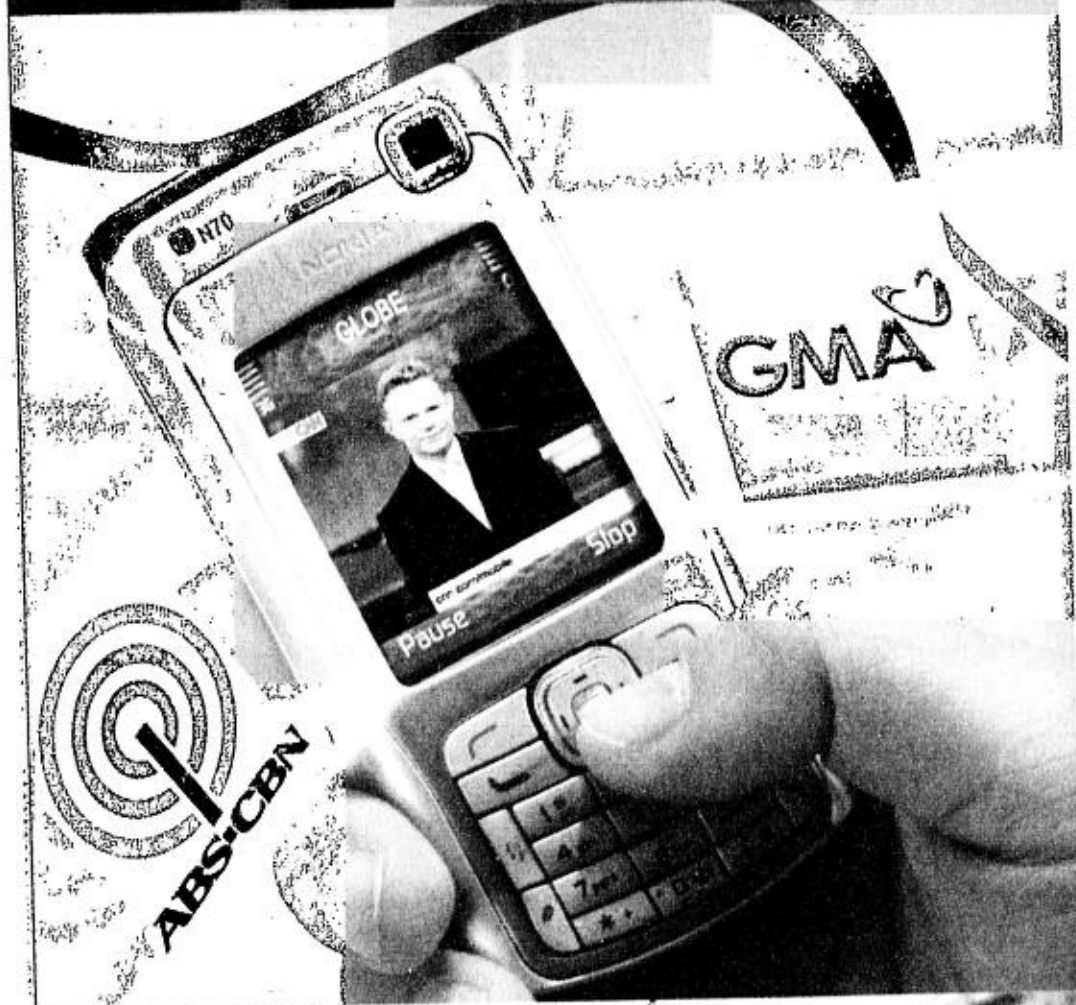
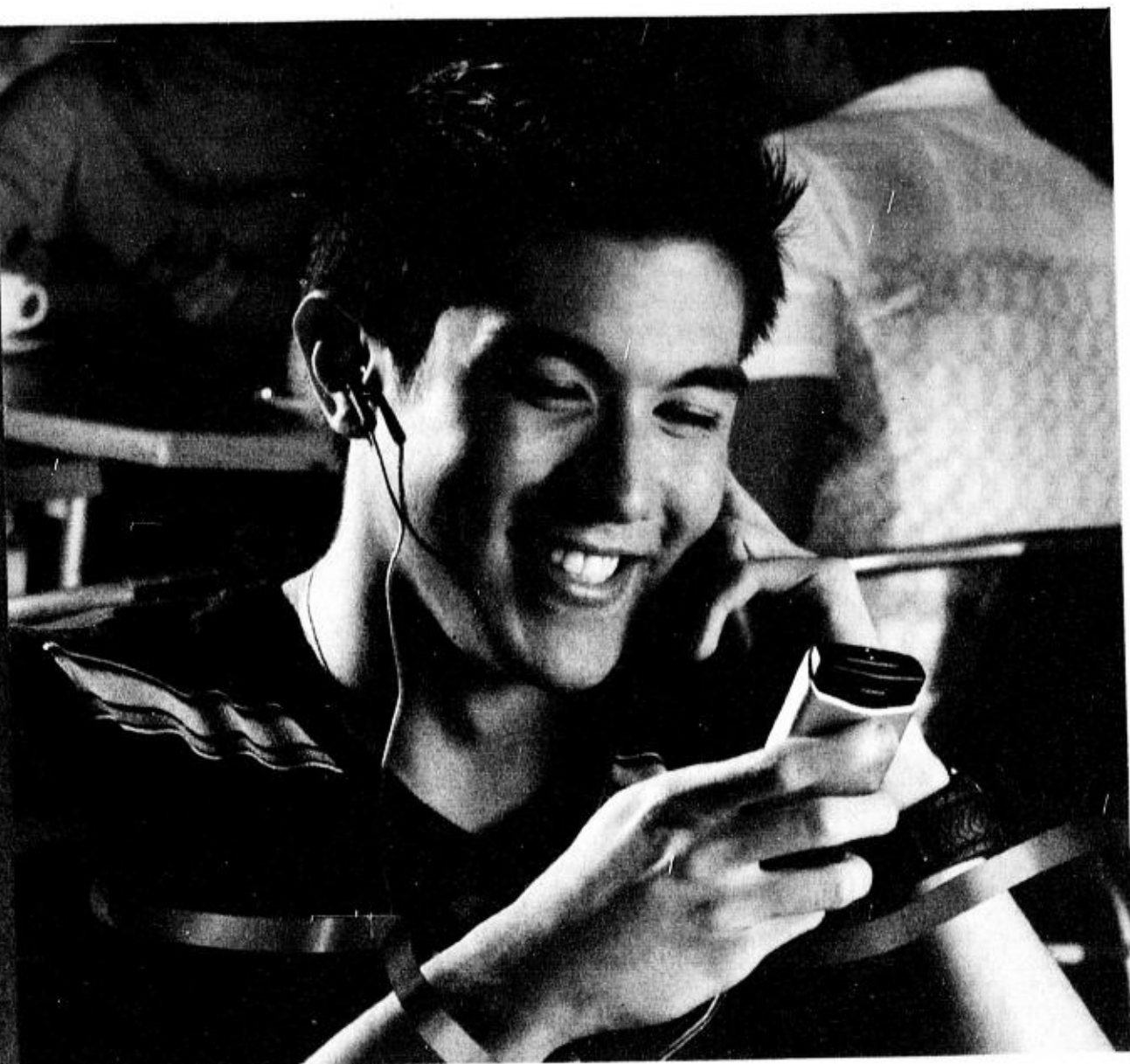
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WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Police to tap school organizations in anticrime drive /A18

■ Elderly couple dead in Parañaque fire /A18

■ Caloocan mayor faces graft raps for allegedly asking for cut in contract /A18



ECHIVERRI

Solon's wife loses car to thieves in Quezon City

By DJ Yap

THE WIFE OF PANGASINAN REP AMADO ESPINO JR. became the latest carjacking victim in Quezon City when car thieves took her Nissan Pajero at gunpoint the other night.

Driver Cesar Elevazo, 46, said he had parked the vehicle owned by Pricilla Ignacio-Espino in front of Star drugstore along Visayas Avenue at 9:30 p.m.

where he had gone to buy medicines.

When Elevazo returned to the car, three armed men came by and ordered him to get out of the vehicle, according to PO2 Kristo John Ramirez of the Quezon City police's anticrime unit.

One of the suspects then got on the driver's seat, while the others forced him into the back seat, Elevazo told police. Ignacio-Espino was not in the vehicle, a 2005 model with plate number XRZ-620, at the time

of the incident, police said.

The suspects drove around for a few minutes before they let the driver out in Barangay Baesa where the suspects left him. Elevazo said he could not remember the suspects' faces, as well as the make and type of their short firearms.

Ramirez said Elevazo was asked to look at photos and artists' sketches of suspected car thieves, but he was unable to identify anyone in the lineup.

Unauthorized download to cell a crime

NBI raids 8 cell phone store branches for copyright infringement



NBI AGENTS raided a branch of Wellcom Telecom Supermarket Inc. in Quezon City yesterday for allegedly offering to its customers download of MP3 songs and videos of known local and foreign artists.

JOAN BONDOL

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Kenneth del Rosario

DOWNLOADING SONGS TO CELL PHONES without the permission of record companies is a crime.

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) issued this warning yesterday following a raid on eight branches of a store offering downloading services for a fee.

Simultaneous raids were conducted at Wellcom Telecom Supermarket Inc. branches in SM Southmall, SM Fairview, SM North Edsa, SM Manila, SM Pampanga, SM Cebu, SM Iloilo and Glorietta Mall in Makati City, according to NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division (IPRD) chief Jose Justo Yap.

Yap said four major record companies, Sony BMG Music Entertainment Phils. Inc., EMI Phils. Inc., Warner Music Phils. Inc. and MCA Records Inc., had complained of copyright infringement by Wellcom.

"The record companies (said) they lost billions of pesos in profits annually because of illegal downloading," Yap said.

Lawyers of the record firms sought the bureau's help in putting a stop to alleged unauthorized reproduction, downloading, and

copying of MP3 songs and videos.

NBI IPRD senior agent Joel Tovera said the lawyers, posing as Wellcom customers, were offered MP3 and MP4 capable cell phones. Buying the units, the employees allegedly said, would entitle customers to "downloading privileges" for a fee of P20 per song or video.

NBI agents discovered that Wellcom also required customers to pay a monthly fee of P600 "to enjoy downloading privileges."

Tovera said, "The act of downloading songs from a computer into a cell phone without consent from owners constitutes copyright infringement." With 32 search warrants issued by Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 24 Judge Antonio Eugenio, the agents seized nine computers and several accessories from the store branches.

Tovera said the agents also got lists of songs available for downloading. "About 90 percent of all copyrighted songs belong to the four companies," Tovera said.

Tovera said Wellcom violated the Intellectual Property Code by offering to copy songs or music videos to mobile phones. But sales manager Elizabeth Ordelliz said the downloading was a "free service" to customers.

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Police to tap school organizations in anticrime drive

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE POLICE WILL HAVE NEW PARTNERS IN fighting street crimes when schools open next month.

The National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) is seeking the assistance of different student organizations in high schools and colleges in preventing petty crimes committed against students.

Metro Manila Police chief Vidal Querol said the organizations would be provided with police volunteer identification cards containing numbers to call to report crimes.

Volunteers would also be encouraged to use their mobile phones to document such crimes as snatching, theft and robbery.

Meanwhile, policemen with spy cameras and advance communication equipment would keep a watchful eye every day on the more than 500 public and private schools in Metro Manila when classes start in June, Querol said.

He said the use of cameras would help record evidence and aid policemen in arresting culprits.

"Our major concern is how to prevent students from falling prey to kidnapping syndi-

cates," he told the INQUIRER yesterday.

To prevent kidnapping, patrolmen will be dispatched to schools from 5 a.m.

"Once students are ... in their classrooms, the policemen will shift their attention to banks and the marketplace. Early in the afternoon, they will make the rounds of malls, where students are likely to hang out," he said.

Policemen would return to the schools before the end of classes in the afternoon, he said.

The NCRPO will meet with school security managers to synchronize security measures in schools with the police's crime prevention efforts.

"We ask all school administrators to include in their orientation of new students, especially those coming from the provinces, not only administrative matters but also safety tips," Querol said.

The Metro Manila police chief said victims of holdup and cell phone thefts were mostly freshmen coming from the provinces.

Some 6,000 policemen would be deployed across the metropolis to ensure peaceful and orderly opening of classes, he added.



LAWYER Bonifacio Alentajan shows copy of complaint filed by four contractors against Caloocan Mayor Enrico Echiverri and city treasurer Lourdes Jose. JOAN BONDOC

Caloocan mayor charged with graft

By Nelson F. Flores and Nancy C. Carvajal

GRAFT CHARGES WERE FILED YESTERDAY AGAINST Caloocan City Mayor Enrico Echiverri in the Office of the Ombudsman.

The case arose from the mayor's alleged attempt to solicit money from an entrepreneur doing business with the city government.

In his four-page complaint, Luisito Rivera said Echiverri violated Section 3 of Republic Act 3019 (the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act) by demanding a "50 percent" share in the more than P9.2 million the city government owed him for services rendered.

Echiverri denied the charges. Rivera's contract was reportedly with the administration of former Mayor Rey Malonzo.

Three other service companies that had contracts with the former city administration also claimed Caloocan was withholding payments due them.

Tiger Construction is trying to collect P13.9 million; Atlantic Erectors, P2.8 million; and Speed Securities and Services, P2.4 million.

Rivera said his Rap-Rap Trucking Services had been distributing water to several water-short Caloocan barangays since 2002. He said his contract with the city government was extended until the month of June 2004.

Rivera added "between...February (and) May 2004, he complied with his obligations and made the appropriate water deliveries to the city and its constituents.

The deliveries were acknowledged, certified and approved for payment."

However, Rivera claimed Echiverri "feloniously and criminally refused to pay" for his services. "Worse, Echiverri demanded 50 percent of my collectibles before payment could be made," Rivera alleged.

He noted that other firms that were similarly situated had already paid.

"I refused to comply with his immoral and felonious demand because I already lost substantial amount of my investments due to the long and unreasonable delay of the said payment," Rivera said. Included in Rivera's complaint was city treasurer Lourdes Jose.

In a statement, Echiverri said the accusations were unfounded. "I never asked money from them and had never met them," he said. The mayor added that the payments for Tiger Construction worth P13.9 million; Atlantic Erectors, P2.8 million and Speed, P2.4 million, were still under review by the city treasurer's office.

"We have to scrutinize the validity of their contracts before I could approve their payments," he said.

"It's taxpayers money," he added. "I could not just authorize the payment without first verifying the contract which could be disadvantageous to the city government."

Echiverri did not say when the account review would end, but said it was "a smear campaign by my political rivals who, as early as today, are already gearing for the 2007 elections."

Elderly couple dead in Parañaque fire

By Jocelyn R. Uy

AN ELDERLY COUPLE DIED AFTER A TWO-hour fire razed their house in a posh subdivision in Parañaque City early yesterday morning. Firefighters in Manila were also kept busy as four fires broke out in different areas of the city one after the other.

Fire investigators in Parañaque identified the fatalities as Mario Ramos and his wife, Chit, both said to be in their 70s, according to fire officials.

The couple tried to escape their burning house on Don Benito Hernandez Street, Governor Santos Avenue in BF Homes Phase III, but failed to do so because of the steel grills framing their windows, said Insp. Rodrigo Capucan, chief of the City Fire Intelligence and Investigation Unit.

Fire investigators have yet to determine the

cause of the fire that reached the second alarm before it was put out at 8:22 a.m. Supt. Leonides Perez, city fire marshal, pegged the damage at P1 million.

In Manila, arson investigators said the first fire broke out at 10:33 a.m. on Lucban Street, Paco, in Manila where 100 houses were burned to the ground. Even while the first fire was going on, another fire hit G. Tuazon and S. Trinidad St., Sampaloc at 12 noon. At around the same time, another fire started at San Nicolas and Elcano Streets, Binondo.

Fire trucks were on their way back to the stations after the Sampaloc and Binondo fires were declared under control before 2 p.m. when another fire alarm sounded.

The fourth fire on Roman Soler Street, Binondo began at 2:39 p.m. Firefighters declared a fire out at 4:39 p.m. With Maile Montayre

So, what's wrong with being a Red in one's youth?

PARTY-LIST REP SATUR Ocampo's reminder to Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor about his past is an indirect confirmation that Ocampo has not yet renounced armed struggle against the government.

He may be a parliamentarian but Ocampo, who represents the leftist Bayan Muna party, still believes in the violent overthrow of the government.

Ocampo was reacting to Defensor's offer of legal help for him and the rest of the "Batasan 5" congressmen on condition that they renounce the armed struggle being waged by the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed unit, the New People's Army (NPA).

The Bayan Muna representative said to Defensor: "Remember your roots."

It was an apparent reference to Defensor's membership in the militant group Kabataang Makabayan when he was in college.

It was a non sequitur. Many leaders in government were attracted to communism in their college days.

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo



Among them was Rigobero Tigla, former chief of staff and now ambassador to Greece.

Another former top government official who was an out-and-out communist in his youth was Ruben Torres, former labor secretary and executive secretary during the administration of President Ramos. Torres was a member of the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP).

So, what's wrong with embracing communism in one's youth? Communism's utopian ideals appeal to the youth.

Youthful idealism is replaced by practical considerations.

Communism's advocacy of armed struggle as a way of changing the system loses its appeal as the youth becomes a responsible, peace-loving adult.

There's another way to change the system and that is to fight it on its own turf—through peaceful means.

METROBRIEFS

Padlocked beerhouses

SEVEN beerhouses were closed down in Muntinlupa City for violating a city ordinance containing the 200-meter proximity rule which prohibits these establishments from operating near schools, churches, hospitals, police stations and government offices. Gary Llamas, chief of the Business Permits and Licensing Office (BPLO), said three bars in Barangay Tunasan and four in Barangay Putatan were also padlocked for violating the "no table" policy which bans employees from entertaining their customers. The BPLO head recently met with 39 club owners in the city to remind them about the other provisions of the ordinance such as the ban on staging lewd shows and the use of skimpy attire outside the club to entice prospective customers. Jocelyn R. Uy

Free funeral service

NAVOTAS public school teachers can now enjoy free burial services. A memorandum of agreement signed by Lions Club International, Dulce Memorial Services and Chapel, the Department of Education and Councilor Ricky Gino-Gino provides free memorial grants to teachers in the town's public schools. Those interested in taking advantage of the benefit can get in touch with the office of Councilor Gino-Gino at tel. no. 281-8602 loc. 307 or 309, the Dulce Memorial Services or



Lions Club International. "We dedicate this public service to our teachers, whom we consider our second parents," said Mayor Toby Tiangco.

Vesak Day

AMBASSADORS and members of the diplomatic community of countries which are the seats of Buddhism will commemorate this month the three major stages in the life of the Buddha: (1) the day he was born, (2) the day he gained enlightenment, and (3) the day he passed away, with a photo exhibit and a free badminton tournament. The festival culminates in the Vesak Formal Celebration on Friday, May 19 sponsored by the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Makati.



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"The Works include the General Requirements, Source Developments and Storage Facilities Works; Transmission and Distribution Facilities Works; Pavement Demolition, Excavation and Restoration Works; Supply of Maintenance Materials and Tools"

Loan No. 1843-PHI

- The Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank toward the cost of the Mindanao Basic Urban Services Sector Project (MBUSSP), and it intends to apply part or the whole of the proceeds of this loan, together with the GOP counterpart funds, to payments under the contract for the Construction of Bay-ang Potable Water System Level III.
- The Municipality of Alameda, Cotabato now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the Construction of Bay-ang Potable Water System Level III which has a pipeline length of approximately 23 kilometers plus. The Works shall include the General Requirements, Source Developments and Storage Facilities Works; Transmission and Distribution Facilities Works; Pavement Demolition, Excavation and Restoration Works; Supply of Maintenance Materials and Tools. Completion of Works is required by 360 calendar days.
- Bidding will be conducted in accordance with relevant procedures for open competitive bidding as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," to the extent it is consistent with Asian Development Bank's procurement procedures and is open to all Bidders from eligible source countries as defined in "Guidelines for Procurement Under Asian Development Bank Loans."
- The documents required in the Eligibility Documents shall be submitted as part of the Technical Documents of the Bidders as provided in the Instructions to Bidders.
- Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), Municipality of Alameda, Cotabato and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on May 15, 2006 to June 19, 2006.
- A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00).
- The BAC, Municipality of Alameda will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on June 5, 2006 2:00 P.M. at the Municipal Hall, Alameda, Cotabato.
- Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before June 19, 2006 at 2:00 pm. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Manager's Check/Cashier's Check/Confirmed Check and in an amount of Eight Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos (P850,000.00) or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on June 19, 2006 at 2:00 pm at the Municipal Hall, Alameda, Cotabato. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below:

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Attn: Mr. Antonio G. Gabuales
Municipal Assessor's Office
Municipality of Alameda
Province of Cotabato

- To be considered eligible and qualified a Bidder must:
 - have a successful experience as prime contractor in the construction of at least one (1) work of a nature and complexity equivalent to the Works during the last five (5) years, such being verifiable from completion certificates. To comply with the requirement the single contract cited should be at least Twenty-Six Million Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P27,500,000.00).
 - have a minimum average annual construction turnover over the last three (3) years equal to Thirty Four Million Pesos (P34,000,000.00).
 - submit audited balance sheets or, if not required by the law of the applicants country, other financial statements acceptable to the Procuring Entity, for the last five (5) years to demonstrate the current soundness of the applicants financial position and its prospective long-term profitability.
- Completion of the Works is required within 360 Calendar Days from the Start of Construction.
- The Municipality of Alameda, Cotabato reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Attention: Mr. Antonio G. Gabuales
Municipal Assessor's Office
Municipal Hall, Alameda, Cotabato
Contact No. 09179576291

(SGD.) ANTONIO G. GABUALES
BAC Chairman

(PDI-May 11 & 17, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
DR. JOSE FABELLA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital invites interested bidders for the bidding of:

Foodstuffs ABC
P3,374,938.00

Bid documents and eligibility requirements may be secured at the BAC Secretariat, Administrative Office. For inquiries, contact tel. nos. 735-71-44.

Schedule of Activities:

Pre-bid Conference	May 18, 2006	Reception Hall, 2:00 pm
Bid Opening	May 30, 2006	Anesthesia Office, 2:00 pm

The DJFMH reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waived any required formality and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal as evaluated is the most advantageous to the government.

The DJFMH-BAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) ELISEA S. MARQUEZ, M.D.
Vice-Chair, Bids and Awards
Committee

(PDI-May 4 & 11, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation and Communications
MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY
Cebu Maritime Regional Office
Ground Floor CCCI Center, cor. 11th & 13th Avenues
North Reclamation Area, Cebu City

Case No. CMRO 05-015

RE: Application for Amendment of Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC) to Permanent Addition of Ship pursuant to Republic Act No. 9295 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

OCEAN FAST FERRIES, INC.
Applicant

ORDER

This refers to the Application for Amendment of Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC) on the permanent addition of ship named:

FOR LINER OPERATION:

Name of Ship	Service/s offered to be offered
MV BLUE SKY	Carriage of passengers only
Routes to be served	
authorized route of Ocean Fast Ferries, Inc.	

The Applicant shall cause the publication of this order once in any of the newspaper of national circulation in the Philippines or in a newspaper of local circulation as applicable.

The Applicant shall likewise simultaneously cause the posting of this Order in a conspicuous place at the affected ports, ships, Applicant's premises, passengers terminals and ticketing offices as applicable.

The Applicant shall present the jurisdictional, qualification and documentary requirements in a summary proceedings to be conducted on May 17, 2006 at 2:00 P.M. at the Hearing Room Cebu Maritime Regional Office, Ground Floor, CCCI Bldg., cor. 11th and 13th Avenues, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City which is within seven (7) days from the date of publication/posting.

The Applicant shall be required to make a written Final Offer of Evidence (FOE) After which, the application is deemed submitted for resolution/decision.

WITNESS, the Honorable Administrator, VICENTE T. SUAZO, JR. this 8th day of May 2006 at Cebu City, Philippines

(Sgd.) GLENN G. CABANEZ
Regional Director

(PDI-May 11, 2006)

US won't reply to Iran president's letter

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED STATES said Tuesday it would make no formal response to a surprise letter sent by Iran's hardline leader, but President George W. Bush vowed to pursue diplomatic efforts to counter Iran's nuclear program.

As Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad arrived in Indonesia, during which he could ask Jakarta to mediate in the nuclear row, Tehran said it was waiting for a reply to his 18-page letter to Bush.

But the White House insisted there would be no response on top of comments already made by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who said it contained "nothing new" that offered hope of resolving the nuclear dispute.

Although a New York meeting Tuesday of foreign ministers from the world's six major powers failed to agree on how to tackle Tehran, Rice said: "The international community is united that there must be a strong message to Iran through the Security Council that their behavior to date is unacceptable." International oil prices edged up again following the US rejection of the letter.

Iran has refused to meet international demands to end its uranium enrichment work, which Washington and its allies believe hides a nuclear weapons drive. Tehran insists its research is for peaceful purposes.

The United States, Britain and France

want a resolution under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which would probably start with a warning to Iran that could be followed up with economic sanctions and even military action.

But China and Russia have spoken out strongly against coercive measures, with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov reaffirming the divide on Tuesday.

"Our position is very firm. We think that at this stage there is no necessity to discuss Chapter 7," Lavrov was quoted as saying by Russia's Interfax news agency.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who was at the New York meeting, said the process of agreeing a UN resolution on Iran could take

up to two more weeks.

Bush said that even China and Russia agreed that Iran must not be allowed to have a bomb, but that he was determined to seek a negotiated settlement rather than launching more coercive measures.

"The first option and the most important option is diplomacy," he said during an appearance in Florida when asked about the Iran dispute by a member of the public.

The letter from Ahmadinejad was the first from an Iranian leader to a US president in more than a quarter century, and called for "new ways" to settle long-running tensions that have reached a new peak over the nuclear dispute.

Tehran portrayed the letter as an impor-

tant diplomatic initiative, but US officials dismissed the document as more philosophical treatise than political overture.

In the letter, Ahmadinejad assailed the United States over Iraq, its reaction to the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, the handling of "war on terror" detainees and even US policy in Latin America.

He suggested that the two countries return to religious principles as a means of restoring confidence. "Will you not accept this invitation?" asked Ahmadinejad in the letter.

"There is nothing in this letter that in any way addresses any of the issues really that are on the table in the international community," Rice said.

AFP



BPI Family Savings Bank Conferred Two Prestigious Awards

BPI Family Savings Bank was recently awarded by the Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC) with two awards: Longtime Partner in Home Financing (Thrift Bank Category) and Biggest Volume of Outstanding Guaranteed Housing Loans (Thrift Bank Category).

Receiving the awards in behalf of BPI Family Savings Bank is BPI EVP Gil Buenaventura. The awards were presented by Vice-President Noli de Castro.

One of the necessities every Filipino should have is shelter. However, the hard times have made it difficult for them to meet everyday needs, much less have their own home. As the country's population continues to increase every year, providing basic needs like food, clothing and shelter becomes a struggle.

Making this reality as the inspiration to provide a better life for Filipinos, BPI Family Savings Bank takes on its mission to give people a chance to make their dreams come true. During Home Guaranty Corporation's (HGC) 6th Charter Day Celebration, BPI Family Savings Bank was given two awards by HGC for Providing the Biggest Volume of Outstanding Guaranteed Cumulative for Ten Years which amounted to P3.5B, and for being a Longtime Partner in Home Financing which started in 1986. The awards were presented by Vice-President Noli de Castro.



BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK

CONFERRED TWO PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS

HGC also cited BPI Family Savings Bank among its distinguished partners. As part of the bank's effort to assist HGC, the institution has been able to provide risk guarantee and fiscal incentives for housing credits. Also during the event, HGC Executives and BPI EVP, Gil Buenaventura performed the symbolic Bolt-In ceremony to signify the strengthening of the continued partnership between HGC and BPI.

BPI Family Savings Bank, true to being the Filipino Family's partner in making goals more attainable, has developed various services that have been instrumental in giving equal opportunity for people to own their dream homes. BPI Family Savings Bank is grateful for the HGC's recognition, as its goal is to help provide a home for every Filipino.

Under the Build your Dream Housing Loan, clients can apply for financing of house acquisition, purchase of lots, townhouse or residential condominium, house construction, home improvement, business expansion. The Build Your Dream Housing Loan may also be used as a multi-purpose loan or to refinance an existing loan with other banks.

Aside from offering the Build your Dream Housing Loan, BPI Family Savings Bank has also partnered with other institutions to provide support to the National Shelter Program of the government.

Build your Dream
HOUSING LOAN

BPI Family Savings Bank is the leader in housing loans because we have helped build more homes for more Filipinos than any other bank.

With our **low interest rates, wide branch network, fast turn-around time and expertise in consumer financing**, BPI Family Savings Bank is the bank you can trust to build your dream house today!

And for your peace of mind, we even have a **FIXED interest rate of 11.5% for 6 to 12 years**.

Why even consider any other bank?

For more information call 845-6888, 754-6369, 754-6917, log on to www.bpiexpressonline.com or visit any BPI or BPI Family Savings Bank branch or Express Banking Center near you.

Provincial Business Center numbers: Pampanga (045) 860-3014 • Dagupan (075) 515-6250 • San Pablo (049) 562-3711 • Lipa (043) 757-1000 • Naga (054) 811-1042 • Cebu (032) 415-7600 • Iloilo (033) 337-4458 • Bacolod (034) 433-4328 • Cagayan de Oro (088) 845-5465 • Davao (082) 235-3558

Build your Dream
HOUSING LOAN

BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK
Get started on tomorrow.

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Temporary aid plan for Palestinians up

UNITED NATIONS—THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET on Tuesday endorsed the creation of a temporary mechanism to deliver badly needed assistance to the Palestinian people suffering under a cutoff of Western aid to their militant government.

The proposal, unveiled after a day of talks among top diplomats of the United States, European Union, United Nations and Russia, was aimed at averting a collapse of services in the Palestinian territories.

It also reflected a careful effort to navigate between a US drive to put a squeeze on the radical movement Hamas, which came to power six weeks ago, and a desire to take care of the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people.

EU external relations commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner said details of the proposal would hopefully be fleshed out in the coming weeks, but signs of difference already emerged between the Europeans and Americans.

A statement issued said the European Union would begin discussions on developing a "temporary international mechanism" to channel aid for the more than three million people in the Palestinian territories.

It said the quartet would back a body "that is limited in scope and

duration, operates with full transparency and accountability, and ensures direct delivery of any assistance to the Palestinian people." It called on donors and international organizations to consider taking part and pressed Israel to take steps to improve the humanitarian situation of the Palestinians.

But the quartet also reiterated that the Hamas-led government must fulfill its responsibilities regarding "basic human needs, including health services, as well as proper fiscal management and provision of services." "The international community is still trying to respond to the needs of the Palestinian people," US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told a joint news conference.

"But ultimately the resolution to this is a Palestinian government that accepts its responsibility for governing," she said.

The United States and EU have frozen aid to Hamas, which they consider a terrorist organization, until it renounces its armed struggle against Israel and recognizes

the Jewish state's right to exist.

But with 160,000 Palestinian government workers clamoring for their salaries and fears mounting of growing chaos and potential violence in the territories, pressure grew for a new outlet for assistance.

The quartet expressed "serious concern about deteriorating conditions, particularly in Gaza" and called on the international community to respond urgently to assistance requests.

"Everybody understands that something must be done," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told reporters during an earlier break in the meeting.

A senior European official said the hope was that the temporary mechanism could be used, among other things, to pay the salaries of the Palestinian civil servants.

The official, who asked not to be named, said the body could also be used to disburse 60 million dollars a month in customs duties and taxes collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinians but withheld since Hamas came to power.

A senior US official said neither case was necessarily true, noting that funneling money to pay Palestinian doctors and teachers would be one thing and dispatching it to pay Hamas police would be another. **AFP**

Iraq PM says unity gov't close

BAGHDAD—IRAQ'S PRIME minister-designate said on Tuesday he was close to forming a government that would end five months of stalemate marked by a lurch to civil war.

But senior negotiators said there was much hard bargaining left before Nuri al-Maliki could present to parliament the sort of national unity coalition he and Iraq's US backers hope can drag the nation back from the brink of sectarian conflict.

A suicide car bomber killed 17 people and wounded 35 at a market in the northern city of Tal Afar, recently held up by President George W. Bush as an example of progress being made in freeing Iraq from violence by al-Qaida and other guerrillas.

It was one of the worst attacks of recent weeks and came after the US military published what it said was new evidence of despondency among Sunni rebels, in the form of a purported captured al-Qaida document detailing their setbacks in Baghdad.

Maliki, a Shiite Islamist whose nomination ended months of factional deadlock, has another two weeks to name a cabinet but told a news conference he might do it "today or tomorrow." "We have achieved much and there is little left to do," he told a news conference where he impressed observers with a lucid style that wasted few words. "We have done 90 percent." The apparent breakthrough, following heavy pressure from the United States, comes after rival Shiite, Kurdish and Sunni groups agreed to fill the sensitive ministries of interior and defense with figures free of ties with militias, Maliki said.

Sunni leaders—and, less vocally, the United States—are demanding the removal of the present interior minister, accused of condoning Shiite death squads in the police. But there was still no agreement on who should take his place, officials said.

Among other posts still undecided, Maliki said, were oil, trade and transport—key to rebuilding the crippled economy. **Reuters**



BOY PHARAOH

Workers put the nearly life-size painted wooden model of Tutankhamun into place for the upcoming exhibit at Chicago's Field Museum, "Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs," Tuesday, May 9. The object was discovered in the tomb of the boy king. **AP**

WORLD BRIEFS

Nepal king's ordinances scrapped

KATMANDU—Nepal's new government is scrapping some ordinances imposed by King Gyanendra after he seized direct power last year, but there are complications in lifting anti-terrorism laws, a senior official said Wednesday. The Cabinet decided Tuesday to invalidate several laws enacted after Feb. 1, 2005, when the king dismissed the government and formed a new one under his leadership. However, the government has not dropped an anti-terrorism ordinance under which several hundred people were charged and jailed, suspected of being communist rebels or having links to them. **AP**

Ex-commie may become Italy's president

ROME—Italy's incoming government is set to elect the country's first former communist president on Wednesday in the face of opposition from most of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's conservative bloc. Prime minister-in-waiting Romano Prodi has vowed to ram through his candidate, Giorgio Napolitano, after two days of wrangling and inconclusive ballots. Winning the vote is vital for Prodi to show his leftist coalition can govern with the smallest majority in post-war Italy. **Reuters**

German cannibal gets life sentence

FRANKFURT—A self-confessed German cannibal was jailed for life on Tuesday after a court found him guilty of murder for killing and partly eating an allegedly willing victim he had met on the Internet. At a retrial, the court in Frankfurt found that Armin Meiwes, known as the "Cannibal of Rotenburg," slaughtered a man to satisfy his dark sexual urges. Judge Klaus Drescher described Meiwes, who sliced off his victim's penis while he was still conscious so they could eat it together, as "psychologically ill" but said he was responsible for his actions. **AFP**

Notorious abusers Cuba, China elected to new human rights council

UNITED NATIONS—THE UN General Assembly elected Cuba, China and Saudi Arabia to the new Human Rights Council on Tuesday, putting notorious abusers on a panel created to replace its discredited predecessor.

US Ambassador John Bolton derided the inclusion of Cuba to the council and said it proved that Washington's concerns about the new panel, which it voted against, were justified.

"What a joy," Bolton said sarcastically of Havana's election. "That simply says that the deficiencies

from the previous commission may well now still be carried over, as we sadly predicted when we voted against this resolution." The United States long criticized the previous commission, saying it was ineffective and loaded with abusers such as China, Cuba, Sudan and Zimbabwe.

The US was among four countries that voted in March against the revamped council, on the grounds that it would be too easy for human rights violators to be elected.

Cuba, for its part, hailed its election to the Human Rights Council as a "resounding victory" for the com-

munist regime and a "defeat" for the United States.

"The United States failed in its goal of preventing Cuba from getting a seat in the most important panel specialized in human rights in the United Nations," Cuba's foreign ministry said in Havana.

The 191-member General Assembly, voting by secret ballot, also elected Russia and Tunisia to the new 47-member council, adding two other countries whose records have been criticized by rights groups. Countries needed at least 96 votes to win a slot. **AFP**

Who will be next? Find out here on your Philippine Idol Network

INQUIRER TV GUIDE Thursday, May 11, 2006

American Idol Wed-Thurs-Fri 10pm

ABC *Maayo*

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5	Kapamilya Cinema			National Geographic	Volleyball League														
ABS-CBN 2				Little Army															
AXN				Mr. Bean															
Cartoon Network				CSI: Miami															
Cinema One				CSI: Miami															
Cinemax				CSI: Miami															
CNN				CSI: Miami															
Crime/Suspense				CSI: Miami															
Discovery Channel				CSI: Miami															
Disney Channel				CSI: Miami															
ESPN				CSI: Miami															
ETC				CSI: Miami															
ETC 2nd Avenue				CSI: Miami															
EWTV				CSI: Miami															
Fox News				CSI: Miami															
GMA 7				CSI: Miami															
Hallmark Channel				CSI: Miami															
HBO				CSI: Miami															
HBO TV				CSI: Miami															
IBC 12				CSI: Miami															
JackTV				CSI: Miami															
Lifestyle Network				CSI: Miami															
MTV Philippines				CSI: Miami															
MYX				CSI: Miami															
National Geographic				CSI: Miami															
NBN				CSI: Miami															
Nickelodeon				CSI: Miami															
PBO				CSI: Miami															
QTV				CSI: Miami															
RPN 9				CSI: Miami															
SBN 21				CSI: Miami															
Sports Plus				CSI: Miami															
Star Movie				CSI: Miami															
Star World				CSI: Miami															
Studio 23				CSI: Miami															

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SPORTS

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JANET BERMAS: Right on target.

JESS YUSON

Laguna archer bags 4 golds

By Marc Anthony Reyes

NAGA CITY—BACKYARD ARCHER Janet De Leon Bermas of Calabarzon swept all four golds she had set her eyes on even as a fisherman's son from Central Visayas sank one more record in track and field yesterday halfway through the Palarong Pambansa at the Metro Naga Sports Complex.

Accomplishing what her elder brothers

failed to do, the 14-year-old Bermas ruled the girls' standard round, 50-meter, 30-meter and the Olympic round to become the most bemedalled athlete thus far in the week-long competitions among more than 6,000 public school students.

An incoming senior at the Makiling National High School, Bermas trained for the Palaro in a wind-swept basketball court of her school in Calamba, Laguna. Her siblings, all archers, failed to compete in the

Palaro when the meet was scrapped in 2001 and 2004.

"We trained in strong winds," said Bermas in Filipino. "Today's wind is almost similar to the conditions we have back home."

Meanwhile, Central Visayas' Jorge Pinanonang emerged the hurdles king after re-writing the secondary boys' 400m hurdles record with a time of 55.7 seconds.

Second-placer Rongie Abing of the Na-

tional Capital Region and third-placer Joemelo Estocado of Bicol Region also bettered the old 57.1 mark of Marlon Arios of Western Visayas set in 2005 in Iloilo City. Abing clocked 55.8 seconds and Estocado 56.7.

The 17-year-old Pinanonang, who comes from the coastal town of Bayawan, Negros Oriental, was leading by more than 10 meters when he

LAGUNA/A-24

Larios fight Pacquiao gift to Filipinos

FILIPINO RING IDOL MANNY PACQUIAO yesterday said his coming bout against Mexican Oscar Larios on July 2 at the Araneta Coliseum is a gift to his countless fans.

"Fighting Larios is my gift to my countrymen for the devotion and respect they have given me and my family during my boxing career," said Pacquiao from his hometown in GenSan Monday.

Pacquiao will fly to California on Saturday to train at the Wild Card gym in Hollywood.

Now financially secured, Pacquiao said money takes a backseat against Larios.

"I am not fighting anybody for money. I am returning a favor to you all," said Pacquiao.

Pacquiao's 'gift to the Filipinos' fight is to be handled by his own outfit, MP (Manny Pacquiao) Promotions, in collaboration with ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.

Called the Mano-A-Mano, Philippines vs Mexico showdown, the fight is being handled as a boxing event fought by Filipinos, promoted by a Filipino and broadcast by Filipinos as an affirmation of the Filipinos' world-class competence.

"Filipinos can watch the match live wherever they may be in the world," said an ABC-CBN spokesperson, who added the bouts could be seen through The Filipino Channel (TFC), INDemand, Direct TV and the network's Mexican broadcast partner.

After 11 years of fighting which included blockbuster bouts against Erik Morales and Marco Antonio Barrera, Pacquiao is undoubtedly the country's richest sportsman.

Davao, MPL enter semis

SAN CARLOS CITY—MUNTINLUPA-PARAÑAQUE-Las Piñas, drawing another sterling performance from striker Cristina de los Reyes, blanked Cagayan de Oro-Misamis Oriental, 4-0, yesterday and joined Davao in the semifinals of the PFF National Under-17 Girls' Football Champions at the SJRI fields here.

A day after lifting MPL to a 2-1 win over Rizal with her second-half strike, De los Reyes scored two brilliant goals that thwarted the Cagayan booters, who were looking forward to another upset after stunning Negros Occidental, 1-0, Tuesday.

De los Reyes broke the ice in the 5th minute with a low shot just inside the box after losing two defenders with her bristling run from the half-line.

She struck anew in the 21st minute, getting a nifty feed from 20 yards out and rolling the ball to the right of the goal to seal the second victory that gave MPL the top spot in Group C of this tournament supported by Red Ribbon, Petron and 2Go and Sports Plus Channel of Solar Sports.

With De los Reyes posing as a bigger threat, attacking midfielder Jessica Ryon was given more room to operate and she was rewarded with an 8th minute goal from long range, before Isabel Kilayko got into the scoring fray two minutes later.

Earlier, Davao pounced on Cebu's shaky defense to come away with a 3-1 victory that saw the Cebuans blow two penalty kicks that would have swayed the momentum to their side.

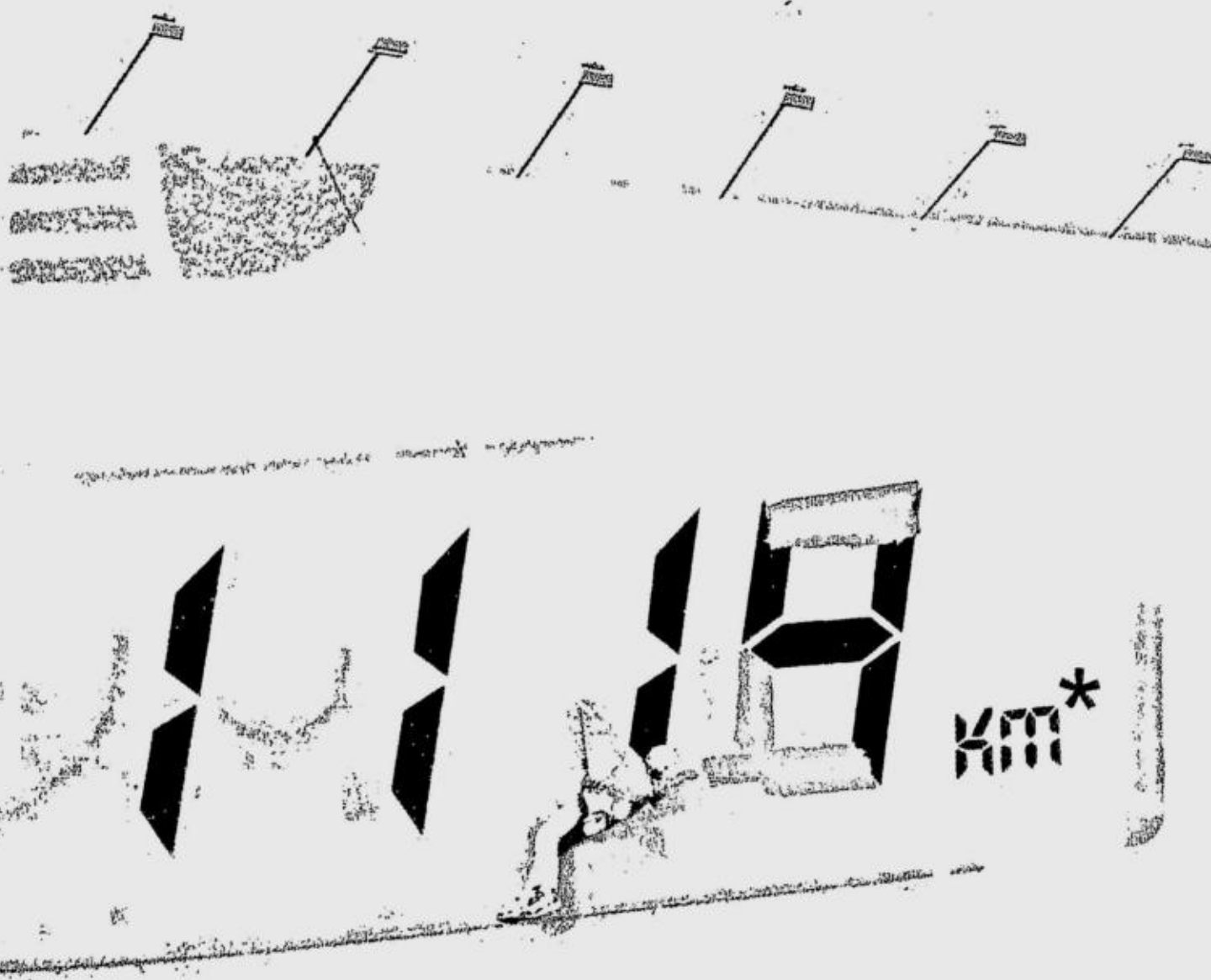
The victory wrapped up the top spot in Group A for the Davaoñans, who are finally playing true to form after their opening-day draw against Bukidnon.

Group B co-leaders Iloilo and Negros Oriental, which battled to a 2-2 standoff Tuesday, are playing separate rivals at press time.

Erlin Mae Salgado's right-footed rocket from the edge of the penalty box in the eighth minute pushed Davao ahead, just two minutes after Cebu skipper Gabi Mercado sent her spot kick wide off the post.

Cedelf R. Tupas

Set a new record.



Pagudpud to Sorsogon on one full tank.
No shortcuts. No estimates.

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Join the Petron Xtra Mile Challenge!

Beat the 1,114km record set by Pocholo Ramirez on just one full tank and win hundreds of thousands in cash. Grab a partner and be one of the six teams to compete in the drive down south from Pagudpud to beyond Sorsogon on just one full tank. If you think you've got what it takes, visit your nearest Petron service station or log on to www.petronfuelsuccess.com and register now.

Deadline for registration is on May 13, 2006. Questions? Call our help desk at 8142183 Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm.



XTRA MILE Challenge

SPORTSWATCH

JVC badminton listing ends today

THE FOUR-LEG JVC OPEN REGIONAL BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS WIND UP in Bacolod next week with a huge field clashing for top honors in various divisions at the Pohang Badminton Center in Bacolod City. Hundreds of players have signed up for the event slated May 16-20 with a lot more expected to beat the deadline for registration today. Fees are pegged at P100 for single entry event and P150 for those playing in two or three events. For details, call 034 4333632/032 4331295, 0917-8050702 (Tonette); 0917-8050601 (Carol); 0917-5288970 (Nelson).

Pabila snares bronze in Turkey

LIGHT-FLYWEIGHT ALBERT PABILA EMERGED AS THE LONE FILIPINO medalist in the 42-nation Ammet Comert Cup XXI International Boxing Tournament which ended Saturday in Istanbul, Turkey. A native of Bacolod City, Pabila lost to Ukrainian Georgiv Chigaev in the semifinals, 26-12, and settled for the bronze medal. The bronze-medal effort equaled the result of the Philippine campaign last year courtesy of light-flyweight Godfrey Castro. Lightweight Mitchel Martinez and Anthony Marcial lost in their respective bids for at least the bronze medals as they lost in the quarterfinals.

AAP Auto Show tomorrow at PICC

IN CELEBRATION OF ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY, THE AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION of the Philippines stages its first ever show dubbed as "AAP Auto Show" tomorrow until Sunday, at the Forum, PICC, CCP Complex, Pasay City. Federation Internationale l'Automobile (FIA), the world governing body for motorsports, is sending its secretary general Peter Deggwiler to grace the event. Department of Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza and LTO assistant Annell Lontoc are the guest speakers. The AAP will also launch its coffee table book "Fast Lane" and hold a photo exhibition.

127 fights up in Salpukan derby

ALL ROADS LEAD TO MAKATI COLISEUM TODAY AS THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL Summer Salpukan 6-cock derby resumes at 2 p.m. with 127 fights on tap. Sponsor is B-Meg Derby Ace. Seeing action are 81 participants with two points and 27 others with 1.5 points. Participants with 2.5 and 3 points challenge one another for the title on Saturday. The total guaranteed prize is P4.4 million (P3 million, two brand new Toyota cars and two motorcycles). A Toyota Altis will be given to the fastest win champion while a Toyota Vios is reserved to the over all fastest win champion. For details, call 896-3545 and 895-6475.

CHESS OFFICIALS:

National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Rep. Properto "Butch" Pichay is flanked by Region XI coordinator James Gamao Infesto (left) and Allan Diez, Mindanao chair for the countryside, after their formal appointment to the NCFP recently.



Roligon 5-cocker stakes P1.5M

ROLIGON MEGA COCKPIT'S KAYANG-KAYA 5-COCK DERBY, SLATED ON MAY 30, June 1 and 3 stakes a jackpot prize of P1.5 million. A three-door Pajero awaits the fastest win champion. Promoter Rolly Ligon said entry fee is only P7,700 and minimum bet, P4,400. The champion handler and gaffer gets P100,000 and P50,000, respectively. Meanwhile, Roligon's new cockfight format, the Fastest Win Event One-Cock Ulutan/Hacklight resumes tomorrow. Promoter Roger del Rosario said a bonus of P5,000 awaits the fastest win champion.

Ailing Giants stop Express

By Musong R. Castillo

A WALKING WOUNDED PUREFOODS SIDE ROLLED TO A FIFTH straight win at the expense of Air21 last night, denying the Express the chance to start a new era on a positive note while inching closer toward an outright semifinal seat in the Gran Matador-PBA Philippine Cup.

The Chunkee Giants bailed themselves out with triples at crunchtime in the fourth period and went on to post a 93-86 victory in wire-to-wire style, but not after losing a key figure in the offensive rotation because of an injury at the Araneta Coliseum.

"I refuse to look at my injured players and have that excuse to lose," coach Ryan Gregorio said. "We're down to eight men, not all of them healthy, but I told the players that it's still 5-on-5 on the court at any given time."

Jun Limpot hit a layup barely a minute on the floor in the first quarter and had to be helped out because of a severe right ankle sprain. He is now listed as doubtful along with Eugene Tejada (ankle), Noy Castillo (calf) and Jordan Salvador, who is out for the rest of the season with an ACL tear.

Fact is, Purefoods is enjoying its longest winning streak of five games under Gregorio with starting power forward Marc Pingris nursing a bruised shoulder and relief point guard Paul Artadi playing with a bad back.

Air21 played its first game without its ex-cornerstone of four years,

shooter Ren-Ren Ritualo, who was shipped to Talk 'N Text as part of a blockbuster six-player deal among three teams on Monday night.

But instead of just rolling over and dying with their only legitimate outside threat gone, the Express fought hard and gave the Giants a scare, though it was not enough to mark a new beginning for the struggling franchise.

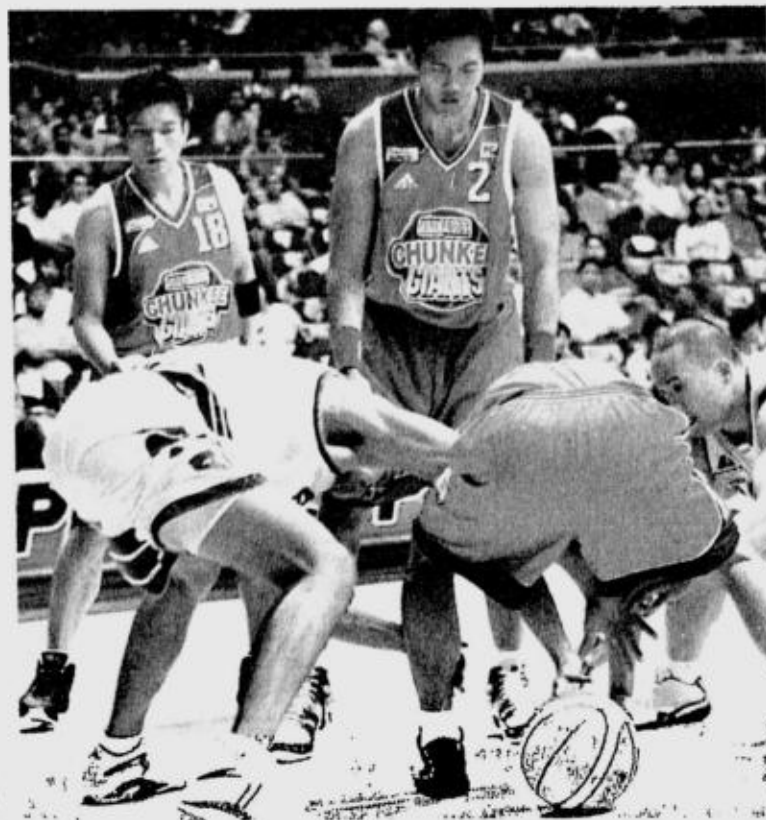
Purefoods led all the way, establishing leads of as many as 12 points early before the enemy moved within one a couple of times, the last at 60-61 after Stephen Padilla, recalled back to the pros from Cebu, hit a three-pointer near the end of the third period.

James Yap led the Giants with 22 points, including two triples in the fourth quarter.

The scores:
PUREFOODS 93—J. Yap 22, Raymond 21, Evangelista 14, R. Yap 13, Artadi 6, Yee 6, Simon 5, Pingris 4, Limpot 2.

AIR21 86—Tubid 18, R. De Ocampo 16, Canalela 11, Telan 9, Avenido 8, Padilla 7, Y. De Ocampo 7, Arboleda 7, Dacia 3, Bernardo 0, Se 0.

Quarters: 25-17, 47-39, 64-60, 93-86



KERBY Raymundo and James Yap leave the fight for possession to a Purefoods teammate and two Air21 defenders.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

PCHS tossers overwhelm Roosevelt; St. Francis wins

PHILIPPINE CULTURAL HIGH School bested Roosevelt College-Marikina, 25-13, 28-26, 25-21, Tuesday in the Shakey's Girls Volleyball Invitational League at the Ate-neo Gym.

Rebounding from a loss last week, St. Francis of Assisi Bacoar beat Holy Family School, 25-11, 25-17, while Colegio San Agustin continued its rise with a 25-15, 25-19 victory over University of Perpetual Help Molino.

UST hurdled MGC-New Life Academy, 25-15, 25-19, while St. Jude notched its first win over Mater Ecclesiae Laguna 25-22, 25-19.

Supporting Shakey's in this 22-school member GVI-League are Dunkin Donuts, Toby's Sports, Mikasa), Asics and Air Philippines, which will fly the Bacolod, Iloilo and Cebu Champions to Manila for the Shakey's Tournament of Champions on June 1, 2 and 3.

Samsung Am Tour goes to Summit Point

THE SUMMIT POINT GOLF AND Country Club in Lipa, Batangas, will host the second leg of the Samsung Amateur Tour on May 16-19.

With a unique concept which used 18 of the best holes in the world as inspiration, Summit Point

has drawn rave reviews especially with the way renowned designer Robert Trent Jones Jr. created the water and sand features.

"Playing in the tournament is really a good reason to find out why so many people are talking

about the character of Summit Point," said Boy Blue Ocampo of the organizing Professional Sports Management Group.

In its first leg at Baguio Country Club last month, Marvin Dumandan nipped Jay Bayron in

sudden-death to qualify for the national finals along with the other division champions.

For inquiries, contact the Professional Sports Management Group at 635-0010, fax 6315768 or 0917-8121242.

Who said De La Hoya is old?

MUHAMMAD ALI WAS 33 YEARS OLD when he stopped Joe Frazier in the "Thrilla in Manila" on Oct. 1, 1975.

Oscar De La Hoya was also 33 years old when he stopped Ricardo Mayorga on Sunday (May 7) at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Nevada.

So who said a boxer is old when he is 33?

Bernard Hopkins was 40ish when he knocked De La Hoya out in the 9th round with a devastating body punch in September 2004. This came after Hopkins inflicted on Felix Trinidad a devastating knockout that forced the famous Puerto Rican to retire prematurely.

In the "Thrilla in Manila," Ali won by TKO when Frazier did not answer the bell for the 14th round. In those days, every world title fight was set for 15 rounds.

In the May 7 "Danger Zone" fight, De La Hoya knocked out Mayorga in the 6th with punches so numerous you need an adding machine to tabulate them correctly with the aid of slow-mo.

When the end came, Frazier had a face so grisly even his own mother wouldn't have recognized him. When he had dinner at The Hyatt hours after the fight, Frazier wore aviator sunglasses to hide swollen cheeks, puffy eyes and black eyes.

I was there, so I know.

Still, after dinner, Frazier found time to camouflage the hurt and pain by belting out rock 'n' roll songs at the hotel bar accompanied by his own band

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza



aply called The Knockouts.

I was there, so I know.

Mayorga was lucky the referee peeled De La Hoya away from him at 1:25 of the 6th when De La Hoya was pouring it on. Otherwise, Mayorga's face would have been horribly rearranged considering De La Hoya's penchant to unleash machinegun shots when given the slightest of openings.

I can understand the viciousness this day of De La Hoya, who, in winning his 7th world crown, was seething with anger from the first bell in lieu of Mayorga's insult of De La Hoya's family and courage before the fight.

Minutes after the victory, De La Hoya approached Mayorga and told The Matador: "I forgive you for the insult you did to me. I'm sure the people have also forgiven you."

It came from the man who won his 28th world title fight, improving his record to 38-4 with 30 knockouts as he grabbed the WBC's 154-pound title from Mayorga, whom De La Hoya decked with a left hook right in the first minute of the first round.

"I had to show the bully that I wasn't

going to back down," said De La Hoya, who knocked down Mayorga a second time early in the 6th before referee Jay Nady stepped in to push De La Hoya away when Mayorga fell again from another barrage of killer blows coming from all directions.

Mayorga, who slipped to 27-6-1, swung real hard but rather recklessly, often hitting nothing but air.

In contrast, De La Hoya was almost impossibly accurate, practically transforming Mayorga's face into a target range.

Not to brag but before the De La Hoya-Mayorga fight, I told two guys De La Hoya would win by knockout.

I was on board an Innova on my way from Cagayan de Oro to Davao City last Friday, May 5, in the company of Toyota hotshots Danny Isla, Raymond Rodriguez and Jing Atienza when Raymond asked, "Who you gonna pick, De La Hoya or Mayorga?"

De La Hoya.

I was having a late breakfast at the Yellow Fin Tuna Restaurant in Davao City last Saturday, May 6, in the company of Ken Angeles, Vic Callao and another fellow whose name I couldn't remember when Ken asked, "Who you gonna pick, De La Hoya or Mayorga?"

De La Hoya.

Mick Jagger said some people just sit and watch as tears go by.

I say as years go by, good fighters can only get better.

Comments to menju@pltdsl.net

Bunyi tackles Abdon in DHL finals

GINO BUNYI STUNNED MIKO YEE, 1 UP, IN the morning quarterfinals then routed Korean Yang Jae, 5&4, in the semifinals yesterday to set up a title showdown with John Kier Abdon for the boys Class A crown in the DHL-WWW-Express national age-group championships at the Villamor Golf Club course.

Abdon, the top qualifier, was pushed to the limit in both of his matches, winning over Edsel Tan, 2 up, and Art Arboleda, 2&1, to advance to today's 36-hole finals against Bunyi.

It will be Kathleen Uy of Cebu against Chihiro Ikeda of Davao for the girls Class A plum after Uy blasted Kristine Leonen 5&4 and Ikeda routed Mendoza, 6&4.

Regine de Guzman and Marian Woo disposed of their rivals early to seal a duel for the girls Class B plum, Maan Legaspi and Andie Unson fashioned contrasting wins to barge into the girls Class C final and 8-year-old Bianca Pagdanganan earned a shot at Felicia Medalla for the girls Class D trophy.

The tourney jointly conducted by the National Golf Association of the Philippines and Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines is sponsored by DHL-WWWExpress.



WWWEXPRESS president Joe Feliciano hits the ceremonial ball. Looking on are DHL country manager Larry Llamson, NGAP officials Danny Pizarro and Gen. Bobby Santiago and participants.

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THURSDAY, MAY 11, 2006

SPORTS

SSC rips
FEU in
V-LeagueMavs rout Spurs,
tie playoff series

SAN SEBASTIAN, DRAWING strength from import Jaroensri Bualae, stopped Far Eastern U, 25-21, 28-26, 25-16, to revive its hopes for a semifinal berth in the V-League presented by Shakey's at the Blue Eagle gym tonight.

Bualae, the Thai guest player of the reigning NCAA champion, came through with 20 kills and teamed up with SSC mainstay Laurence Ann Latigay in dominating their rivals, especially in the third set to complete the sweep.

The victory was the Lady Stags' second straight, enabling them to wheel back into contention after dropping their first three games. But with a 2-3 card, the Recoletos-based spikers needed to win their last two games in the elims to gain at least a tie for the last semis berth.

Under the format, the top five teams after the single round elims will advance to the semis of this event presented by Shakey's Pizza and organized by Sports Vision.

La Salle, still playing with Philippine Christian U at presstime, shows the way with a 4-0 slate while Adamson and PCU share second place with 3-1 cards.

FEU, which stunned erstwhile unbeaten Adamson last Sunday, dropped to 3-2.

Latigay proved to be a solid back-up to Bualae, knocking in 10 kills and winding up with 11 points for the Lady Stags.

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS—JOSH Howard had 27 points and nine rebounds and Dirk Nowitzki added 21 for fourth-seeded Dallas who stormed to a 113-91 win over San Antonio that evened the quarter-final series at one game apiece.

After giving in to the patient pace of the top-seeded Spurs in Sunday's 87-85 loss in the opener, Mavericks coach Avery Johnson inserted the speedy guard Devin Harris in the lineup, replacing swingman Adrian Griffin for Tuesday's game.

"We wanted to force the tempo and play at our pace," Harris said. "In game one we played at their pace."

The move was a masterstroke as Harris helped contain Tony Parker and accelerated the offense to a new gear the Spurs could not match. Harris scored 20 points on seven-of-12 shooting.

Another beneficiary was Howard, who clearly had some extra hop in his step. He did all of his damage in the first three quarters, making seven-of-17 shots and 11-of-11 free throws.

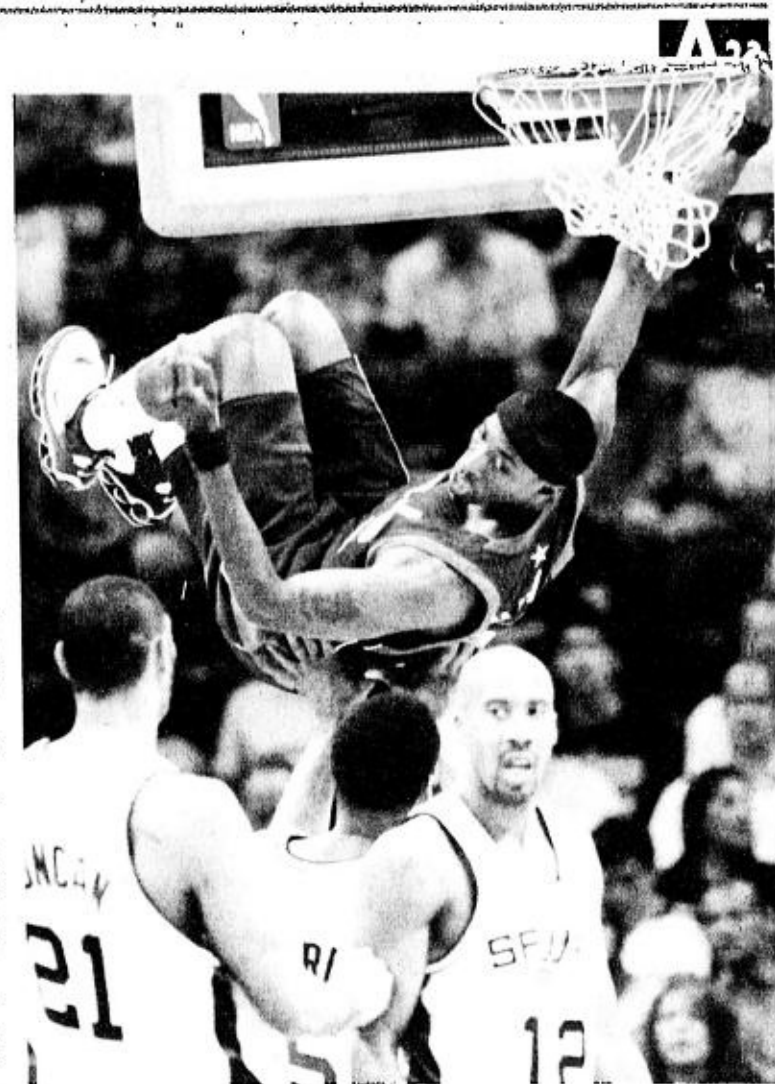
Jerry Stackhouse also was a factor with 19 points off the bench for Dallas, which improved to 3-1 on the road in the postseason and returns home for Games Three and Four on Saturday and Monday.

The Mavericks sped to a 7-1 lead that had Spurs coach Gregg Popovich drawing a technical foul.

A jumper and two driving dunks by Howard and a 3-pointer by Stackhouse built the lead to 25-14.

In Sacramento, California, Rick Adelman was fired by the Sacramento Kings on Tuesday despite leading the club to eight consecutive appearances in the National Basketball Association playoffs as the most successful coach in franchise history.

Geoff Petrie, the Kings' president of basketball operations, gave only murky reasons for the decision, which probably was caused by clashing egos and the empty trophy case of owners Joe and Gavin Maloof, who are widely thought to be behind Adelman's departure. AP/AF



DALLAS' Josh Howard hangs onto the basket after a dunk.

Pistons go 2-and-0 vs Cavs

DETROIT, MICHIGAN—RASHEED Wallace scored 29 points to lead a balanced attack as Detroit demoralized Cleveland with a 97-91 victory that opened a 2-0 lead in their quarter-final series.

As they did in game one, the top-seeded Pistons used a strong start, sharp shooting from the arc and a concerted defensive effort on superstar LeBron

James on Tuesday to improve to 6-1 in the postseason. Game three is Saturday in Cleveland.

"Right now we've got to be a little greedy," Pistons center Ben Wallace said. "We've got to go into Cleveland looking to close this thing out. We've got them on the ropes."

Detroit maintained control despite just one very timely basket from Richard

Hamilton, its top scorer in the playoffs.

Leading the way was Wallace, who had a quiet 10 points in the opener but came alive Tuesday. Looking for his offense, he made 10-of-17 shots, including 5-of-8 3-pointers. AFP

NBA on TV:
SOLAR SPORTS—New Jersey vs Miami (8 a.m. live, 8 p.m. replay)
RPN-9—LA Clippers vs Phoenix (10:30 a.m.)



WALLACE



JAMES

REUTERS

Nadal trips
'Phantom
of Miami'

ROME—RAFAEL NADAL CLEARED A MAJOR obstacle in his pursuit of Guillermo Vilas' Open era record 53-match winning streak on clay.

Nadal beat 2004 champion and mentor Carlos Moya, 6-1, 2-6, 6-2, in the first round of the Rome Masters on Tuesday for his 48th successive win on dirt. He'll match Vilas if he retains the Rome title, and tie Bjorn Borg's record of 16 titles as a teenager.

Nadal acknowledged Moya presented "the worst first round" opponent possible.

"When you practice every day with one person, you know exactly (his style). And he is one of the best players in the world on clay," said 19-year-old Nadal. "When I lost the second set I saw the phantom of Miami."

Moya beat Nadal in three sets in the first round at Key Biscayne in March.

A large Foro Italico crowd with high expectations of the clash between the two Mallorcans began to groan after Nadal won the first set and perked up when Moya forced a third.

Nadal broke for 2-0, and saved two break points at 4-2 to finally end Moya's resistance, and lead their head-to-head 3-2.

"That was a very important moment in the game," Nadal said. AP

Spain aims
for World
Cup glory

MADRID, SPAIN—ANOTHER TOURNAMENT, another disappointment?

Spain makes its eighth straight appearance in the World Cup with hopes of success understandably low.

A soccer giant at club level, the national team has lifted only one major trophy—the 1964 European Championship.

Spain has played in 11 tournaments overall, but has only won 19 out of 45 games.

The latest coach charged with helping Spain to live up to its potential is 67-year-old Luis Aragones, who is unbeaten in 19 matches since replacing Inaki Saez after the country's flop in Euro 2004.

Aragones says he believes Spain can reach the last four, although it could face five-time champion Brazil in the quarterfinals—the team's stumbling block in two of the last three tournaments.

"It's my professional ambition and I try to transmit to the players that we have to achieve it, that we're going to achieve it. That this time the myth will be ended. That we're going to get past the quarterfinals," Aragones said recently.

The coach said the team has to be able to survive uncomfortable moments. Every World Cup-winning team has struggled on its way to the title, he said.

"To win, you have to know how to suffer," Aragones said. AP

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Sparks seek solo lead vs Tortillos

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE FORMER WHIPPING BOYS are now feared.

From tailenders in the last two conferences, the Toyota Otis Sparks now inspire awe for their brilliant finishes and late-game rallies that have boosted them on top in the PBL Unity Cup.

And this seriously concerns coach Robert Sison when his Granny Goose Tortillos battle Toyota Otis at 4 p.m. today at the Olivarez Sports Gym in Parañaque. "They're the comeback team,"

said Sison. "We just have to be ready, we're expecting a physical game."

Coach Louie Alas, though, has worries of his own when his Sparks shoot for the solo lead against the resurgent Tortillos.

"We have to contain their shooters, otherwise we are in trouble," noted Alas.

Two teams who are in deeper trouble, the TeleTech Titans and the Hapee-PCU Teetmasters, clash at 2 p.m.

With only three games left in the elimination, Titans and the Teetmasters need a win to revive their

quarterfinal bids.

The top two finishers at the end of the double round robin will earn outright semifinal berths, while the bottom placers will be eliminated.

Getting a big lift from its second stringers, Toyota Otis stunned defending champion Rain or Shine, 67-61, last Thursday.

Emerson Oreta, who averaged a mere 2.7 points in previous games, shot 12 markers including key baskets in the final stretch.

Granny Goose also got a boost from its bench, with Alfie Grijaldo leading with 18 points to post an 88-73 triumph over the Montaña Jewels last Tuesday.

GAMES TODAY
(Olivarez Gym)
2 p.m.—Hapee-PCU
vs TeleTech
4 p.m.—Toyota Otis
vs Granny Goose



JOE DEVANCE (right) will carry the load for Toyota. ERIK ARAZAS

Taguig cagers trim Valencia

MAYOR FREDDIE TING'S FORWARD TAGUIG cagers repulsed the visiting Valencia Golden Harvest, 76-67, Tuesday night to gain a share of the lead with idle Bacchus/Harbour Centre in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the C.P. Tinga gym in Taguig.

Ex-pro Marlon Legaspi and Paul Reguera sparked as Taguig improved its record to 4-2 in the northern division of the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

Legaspi and Reguera scored 15 and 12 points, respectively, to help Taguig deal Mayor Jose Galaro Jr.'s Valencia squad its fourth loss in six games.

Trailing 56-70, Valencia knocked in three straight triples to come within 65-70 with two minutes left. But Reguera and Joel Gragasian combined for six points to douse cold water on Valencia's rally.

"Our morale was down after our winning streak was snapped in our last game," said Taguig coach Danny Gavieres. "It's a good thing we were able to get back on track."

Valencia tackles Pangasinan Hundred Islands in Dagupan City tomorrow.

The scores:

TAGUIG 76—Legaspi 15, Reguera 12, Dulay 11, Gragasian 11, Constantino 6, Abad 6, Castro 6, Uy 6, Patrimonio 2, Santiago 1, Magsambol 0

Valencia 67—Cummings 12, Braga 9, Cruz 8, Berami 8, Tallagatos 7, Cabill 7, Clavel 7, Cesar 4, Cellz 3, Navales 2, Romaguera 0

Quarters: 27-15, 48-38, 63-48, 76-67

Laguna archer bags 4 golds

From page A-21

barely cleared a hurdle in the final 150 meters that paved the way for the close finish.

He said he would still compete in his pet 400 meters today.

Nathaniel Tolentino of NCR al-

so took his share of the archery honors when he captured the secondary boys' standard and the 50m events. Also hitting gold was NCR's Emmanuel Caducang in the boys' 30 meters.

Bermas totalled 621 points to beat Loverlyn Diez of Zamboanga Peninsula (605) and Gillian Capinpin of Bicol Region (603) in the standard round. She scored 293 points to edge teammate Samantha Mercado (285) and NCR's Ronalyn Alvarez in the 50m. In the 30m, Bermas made 328 points and won over Marilyn Osias (by countback) and Capinpin (326).

The daughter of a jeepney driver, Bermas scored 104 points in her Olympic round final showdown against Central Visayas' Emily Santiago, who had 95 points.

The daughter of a jeepney driver, Bermas scored 104 points in her Olympic round final showdown against Central Visayas' Emily Santiago, who had 95 points.

Garduce eyes top in 2 to 3 weeks

By Jasmine W. Payo

FOR SOMEONE ENDURING MT. Everest's harsh alpine weather, Romi Garduce looked quite jovial.

"The whole time, I've been fine," Garduce said in Filipino during a teleconference yesterday at the GMA Network. "I've suffered headaches and vomiting, but I haven't experienced acclimatization problems like the others I've seen. Some have been fainting."

Garduce, who's already at the base camp of the 29,028-foot mountain, claimed he's on track in his bid to be the first Filipino to conquer the

world's highest peak.

"In two or three weeks, we're hoping to finish the expedition," he said. "We just keep praying for good weather and good health."

Even the news crew documenting the historic attempt in Nepal noted that nothing seems to dampen Garduce's spirits.

"He's having a difficult time, but he still manages to laugh and entertain us with his stories," said reporter Jiggy Manicad.

Garduce maintained he isn't putting too much pressure on himself. "Everest is just the start. It's not the ultimate and it isn't the end."

RP hosts fencing tilt

THE PHILIPPINES GETS ANOTHER chance to show its fencing prowess in the region when it hosts the Southeast Asian fencing championships on May 13-20 at the Philsports Arena (formerly Ultra) in Pasig City.

"After successfully defending its overall crown in the last SEA Games here, we (RP fencers) will attempt to establish our competitiveness in all age group categories over the entire Southeast Asian region," Philippine Fencing Association and Asian Fencing president Celso Dayrit said as he announced the country's hosting of the event.

Sponsored by the Philippine Sports Commission, the tourney will be the biggest ever in the 18-year history of the Southeast Asian Fencing Federation (SEAFF) because it will feature competition in cadets (17 years old and below) and juniors (20 and below). A total of 24 gold medals will be up for grabs.

This is the second time the Philippines will host this event since 1992 when the Filipinos wrested the overall crown from Indonesia by winning nine out of 10 golds.

Admission in the event is free. Elimination rounds start at 9 a.m. while the finals are set at 4 p.m.



ALVAREZ: Good show in his first attempt.

Asian Open: Alvarez 2nd

JOHN ALVAREZ OF THE CEBU Racing Group put up a gallant stand against international rivals and wound up second in the Junior ROK division of the Asian Open Zone Karting Championship at the Shah Alam Circuit in Malaysia.

Alvarez, who's backed up by Paramount Insurance, Prestige Cars BMW, Castrol and Thunder Energy Drinks, started at the back of the 11-

kart grid following an incident in the pre-final heat. He passed one driver after another, even beating Malaysian champion Fei Hoong on his home circuit.

After passing nine karts, Alvarez posted the fastest time of 56.340 seconds on the 18th lap as he tried to close in on Indonesian champion Rio Haryanto, who took the checkered flag with a time of 19:12.81.

Pecante rips powerlift mark

FILIPINO ERLINA PECANTE SET A world record in squat with a lift of 200.5 kilograms in the 90-kilogram class en route to a four-gold medal performance in the Masters event of the recent Asian Powerlifting Championships in Taebaek City, Korea. Pecante, who also holds the world record of 205kg in the 82.5kg, also bagged the gold in bench press, deadlift and overall total with lifts of

115kg, 170kg and 485kg, respectively. Nina Oca also came home with four golds in the 52kg class, lifting 112.5kg, 130kg and 302.5kg in the squat, bench press, deadlift and overall total, respectively. She established Asian and Philippine records in all events. Eddie Torres won the gold and reset his own Asian Masters mark with a squat of 260kg in the 100kg class.



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'We will not be swayed!'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

"WHAT ELSE IS NEW?"

Initially, Marissa Laguardia, chair of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB), seemed unperturbed by the tempest of controversies stirred by the Hollywood movie "The Da Vinci Code."

Laguardia turned serious, however, with regard to the complaint filed by the Philippine Alliance Against Pornography Inc. against the MTRCB.

The anti-pornography group sought the help of the Commission on Human Rights, claiming that the MTRCB had "committed rampant grave abuse of authority."

In a phone interview with INQUIRER Entertainment, Laguardia explained the board's position: "The Alliance Against Pornography is free to seek the assistance of any agency it wants to approach."

When it came to "The Da Vinci Code," however, the MTRCB would remain unequivocal, said Laguardia. "Whatever decision the MTRCB arrives at with regard to the classification of 'The Da Vinci Code,' we will remain firm. We will not be swayed by any group."

INQUIRER Entertainment obtained a copy of the anti-pornography group's complaint, which alleged that the "MTRCB chief illegally signed the license/permit to import an 'anti-Christ' film [and] il-

MTRCB chair reacts to anti-porn group's complaint

legally approved its trailer."

"It's legal," Laguardia said. "I signed it so that the distributor (Columbia Pictures, Sony Pictures Releasing International's local office) can bring in a copy of the film to the country and submit it to the board for review. How can we determine whether the film is indeed 'libelous or defamatory' if we don't preview it first? We have to see the film first before we can pass judgment."

She said she's very familiar with the legal points raised by the anti-pornography group "because these are based on the MTRCB's implementing rules and regulations."

If the anti-pornography alliance could have its way, "the Philippines would be the first country in the world that would boycott the film," Laguardia pointed out.

"According to research, 'The Da Vinci Code' has received a PG-13 in the United States, G in China and PG-12 in Korea," Laguardia said. "I've been closely monitoring the issue. I've noticed that if there are

groups that are strongly against the film, there are also groups that are passionately in favor of it."

Still, she remained adamant: "We cannot allow all these facts, opinions and controversies to affect our final decision."

At the time of the interview, Laguardia noted, "Columbia hasn't scheduled a screening with the MTRCB yet. Knowing the film's May 18 playdate, the distributor should submit it for review within a week."



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Director aims for an Emmy with NY soap

JENNYLYN Mercado, Mark Herras, Jolina Magdangal and Marvin Agustin



By Nini Valera

DIRECTOR LOUIE IGNACIO IS AIMING FOR an Emmy for his latest soap, "I Luv New York," which was shot on location in the Big Apple.

Ignacio, 39, told the INQUIRER on Monday that Filipinos could compete in the global market for soap and telenovelas, and "I Luv New York," his comeback series to be aired over GMA 7 starting May 15, would prove this.

Using three state-of-the-art cameras that delivered 24 frames per second, Ignacio captured the depth and texture of film while working on a digital format. He described his product as a mixture of the essence of the New York lifestyle and its sophistication and the sensibility of Asian telenovelas, which have become a staple in local primetime viewing.

"So we could win an Emmy for this," he insisted. "We can do it."

While he handled the three cameras used for the shoot, and was his own cinematographer, he had to rely on a New York labor force for most of the grunt work, owing to the strict union laws that rule the city that never sleeps.

Life in New York, as everybody knows, is fast-paced, and Ignacio discovered that he could keep up with the speed of light. New Yorkers, he said, like to start early and finish early.

"I could be a New Yorker myself," he said. He told his stars that they had to work like New Yorkers and should never come late to the set. The stars also had to memorize their lines before they reported for work.

Shooting was a breeze, even if the cameras whirled for as long as 12 hours a day and he had to pay the New York crew stiff union rates for overtime work.

The stars—Jolina Magdangal, Marvin Agustin, Jennylyn Mercado and Mark Herras—worked like pros. "No one was a problem," Ignacio said.

Eighteen episodes for the soap's beginning and ending were filmed in New York against a backdrop of the usual tourist spots, like the Rockefeller Center, the Chrysler Building, the Brooklyn Bridge,

DIRECTOR/A2-2

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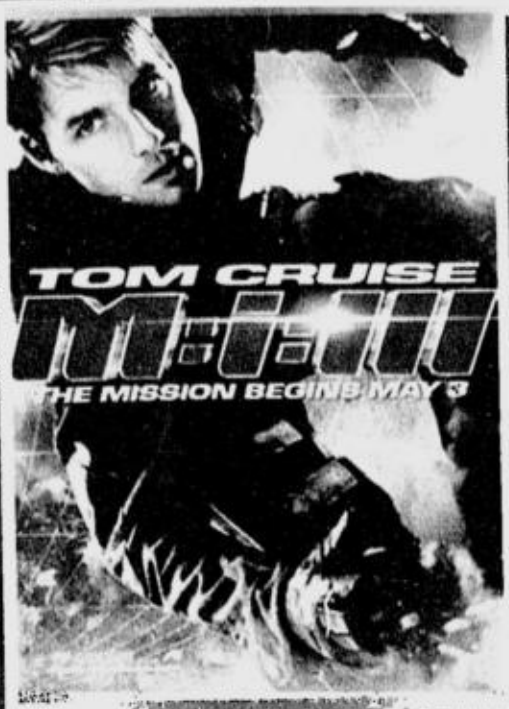
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A2-2
Director aims for an Emmy with NY soap

From page A2-1

Central Park, Times Square, the Statue of Liberty, among other destinations.

But Ignacio claimed that these sites were just the background for the story of four people whose lives had intertwined in New York.

"The story runs its course," he said. "I was afraid that this soap might turn into a travelogue. It did not. New York was simply the setting and the story was still the main event, and no one can say that we just went on a tour of New York and filmed the tourist attractions."

With New York still on his mind, Ignacio changed some settings for scenes that were shot here. For example, Mark, who plays the character of a poor boy in search of his mother in America, the location had originally been a squatters' area in Metro Manila.

"But that would have shown us to be in such a desperate state. So I changed the location of Mark's home and brought it to the province," Ignacio related.

In shooting the rural scenes, Ignacio was inspired by masters like Fernando Amorsolo who used color and light to depict an idyllic life, which he described as so Filipino.

The Filipino in Ignacio also triggered a bout of homesickness for the director. Before the 22 days allotted for the shoot were up, Ignacio had wanted to go home.

"My heart is in the Philippines," he declared. "I don't want to leave it for long."

But he conceded that it was easy for him to fall in love with New York.

Ignacio also fell in love with his cast.

"I've seen Jolina and Marvin as a love team in the other station," he said. "In this soap, I witnessed first hand the magic in that tandem. They're still a love team despite the changes in their lives. No one could miss that special chemistry between them."

"This is a first in local television," said Wilma Galvante, GMA 7 senior vice president for entertainment.

DID YOU KNOW...
THE LOUVRE allowed "The Da Vinci Code" cast and crew to film inside the Paris museum, but the Westminster Abbey scenes were filmed elsewhere in the United Kingdom after church officials declined permission.

We haven't heard the last of Paris Bennett

WHEN PARIS BENNETT WAS VOTED OUT of "American Idol" last Thursday, the singing tilt lost its youngest finalist and last remaining African-American performer.

We were especially sad to see Paris go because, to us, she was the show's gutsiest and most creative contender.

At only 17, she "dared" to compete with much older and experienced contestants, some of whom were more than 10 years her senior.

We also loved the way that Paris, the tilt's "teen chameleon," would adjust her singing style and look to suit her song each week.

Now that she's out of "AI," is this the end of the road for Paris Bennett?

Not hardly. There's a huge teen music market out there, and with savvy packaging and marketing, Paris could be this year's top new teen recording sensation.

So, it's likely that we haven't heard the last of young Ms Bennett, not by a long shot.

Meanwhile, back at "AI's" feeding frenzy, Final Four Katharine McPhee, Chris Daughtry, Elliott Yamin and Taylor Hicks are making a mad, go-for-broke dash to see who will comprise the 2006 competition's Top Three.

Last year's Carrie Underwood, Bo Bice and Constantine Maroulis, have all done well in their respective solo careers, so the same thing could happen to this year's top trio.

Any bets? Our psychic surmise is that Elliott will turn out to be the odd-man-out today, so Chris, Katharine and Taylor will slug it out in the "final-finals."

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

On the other hand, there are fans of the show who believe that it'll be an all-male lineup for the competition's last stretch.

For our part, however, we believe that there are enough viewers out there who believe that Katharine's unique combination of talent, looks and stellar charisma is too good to pass up, and therefore deserves their enthusiastic support, despite her less-than-glowing reviews from the

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HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're creative and talented. You can excel in music, the theater and the arts. Others sometimes think you're eccentric. (You live larger than life.) People often misunderstand your flair for originality. In your 20s, you begin to reach out hungrily for life. Your curiosity is voracious! After age 50, you're attracted to the notion of domestic security. Expect a fun-loving, social year ahead.

Birthdate of: Natasha Richardson, actress; Holly Valance, pop star; Martha Graham, choreographer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be very careful with money. Think twice before you shop or spend your hard-earned cash. You're definitely tempted to go overboard. Fortunately, you might go overboard earning money as well.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): It's a good thing that you're a practical, sensible sign. In discussions with partners and close friends, don't give away the farm. Don't make promises you can't keep.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today fat, happy Jupiter opposes your ruler, Mercury. Tra la, tra la! It feels like everything is hunky-dory and just fine. Perhaps it is. Make sure you're not in denial about something.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You will enjoy working with others, especially groups, today. However, be careful about what you volunteer for or agree to. (It's very easy to bite off more than you can chew today.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Give yourself a lot of leeway when setting deadlines with bosses and authority figures today. Don't make it hard on yourself in your attempt to impress someone.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You might have to modify travel plans or anything to do with education, publishing and the media—simply because things are not as rosy as they seem. You're thinking big today!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Don't overcompensate for something by giving someone too much. (You might be inclined to do that today.) Alternatively, you might want too much. (Oops! Naughty, naughty.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): In your eagerness to reach an agreement with others today, you might promise them the Sun and the Moon. Don't overstretch yourself. Be realistic.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Things are a bit excessive at work today. People are going overboard about something. Don't jump on the bandwagon. Keep your wits about you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You're wildly creative today! You're also in a wonderful party mood. Enjoy playful activities with children. Happy flirtations will please you now.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Plans to expand where you live or to explore a real estate deal look promising! Wait a day or two to see if things still appear this way.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): It's easy to have a positive frame of mind today. You're thinking like a winner! This optimism attracts people to you.

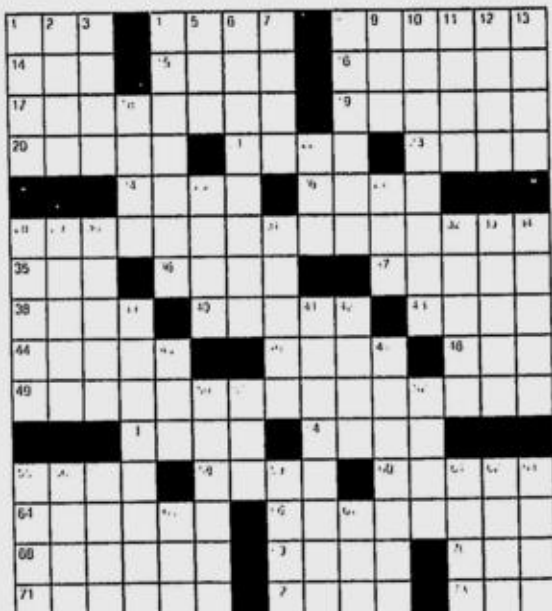
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- 24 Longlois and
- 26 Newspaper
- 28 Part 2 of quip
- 35 Dawn
- 36 PC command
- 37 TV teaser
- 38 Sea eagles
- 40 Back-comb
- 43 Brit's sitcom
- 44 Played a part
- 46 "...the night before..."
- 48 PX patrons
- 49 Part 3 of quip
- 53 Butter
- 54 Bigfoot's shoe
- 55 Young salmon
- 58 Evaluation
- 60 Pampas lasso
- 64 Consecrate
- 66 End of quip
- 68 "...of Liberty"
- 69 Still part of a river
- 70 Shoshone
- 71 Unruffled
- 72 Sutherland
- 73 Old-time cowboy

DOWN

- 1 Vegetarian
- 2 Swedish rock
- 3 Jot black



By Alan P. Olschewski
Huntington Beach, CA

5/11/06

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved



- 45 Lentil dish
- 47 Fatty tissue
- 50 Medium-size
- 51 Clod chopper
- 52 Housing grp.
- 55 QB option
- 56 Pot starter
- 57 "The Not Taken"
- 59 Small drinks
- 61 Colla lily, e.g.
- 62 Small, New World monkey
- 63 Pinnacle
- 65 Crackpot
- 67 Small dog

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO



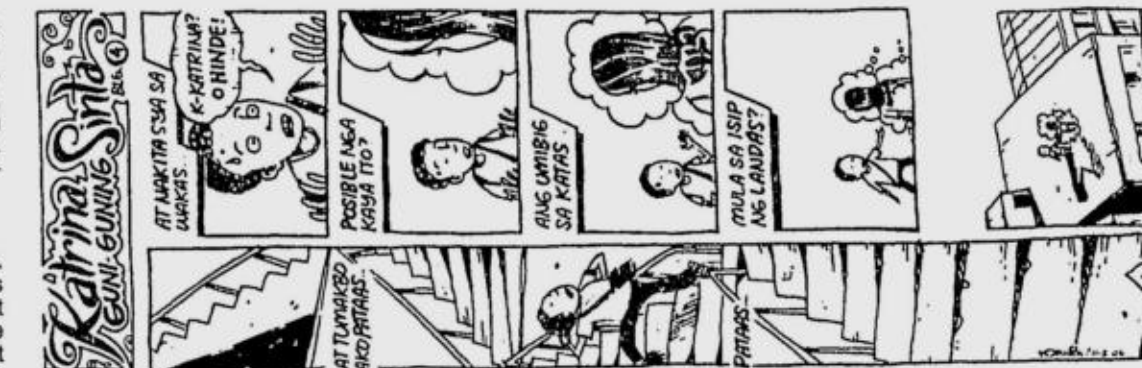
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON



KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA



LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO



TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



We haven't heard the last of Paris Bennett From page A2-3

show's judges of late. In addition, Katharine is the last remaining woman in the finals, and the show's female contestants deserve to be represented in the tilt's last stretch, because they have figured so strongly in the competition. In fact, when the final 12 were first revealed, the girls generally trounced the guys on both talent and looks. It was only during the subsequent rounds that the male finalists' individualistic performance styles started making a greater impact on viewers, generally upstaging the female bets' more predictable performances. So, Katharine should "represent" the ladies as long as she can. Of course, the show's viewer-voters have the last word on the matter. If more than 45 million votes were cast last week, even more could come in now, as the Final Four's respective millions of fans support them to the very end.

Vilma's excellent performance Last Thursday, we caught the first half of the "Maalaala Mo Kaya" drama in which Vilma Santos played the mother of a physically and mentally-challenged girl. Doctors warned her that her child faced a grim and severely-circumscribed future, but Vilma's mother character refused to give up on her. True enough, her daughter was able to overcome some of her limitations, so the drama made for inspiring viewing. Even better, Vilma once again showed why she is regarded as one of our finest actresses. Her portrayal was focused, committed, insightful and versatile—a potential

winner in this year's TV acting awards derbies. Ricky Davao, who played Vilma's husband, also turned in an excellent performance, so he deserves the most enthusiastic kudos as well. Lastly, director Olivia Lamasan's handling of the drama was admirably textured and felt. The major fly in the show's ointment was its slow plot progression and pacing, perhaps because it's a two-part production (the second half will be telecast tonight). If the drama had been concluded last week, it would probably have come off better. So, why the two-part format? Could Vilma's hefty talent fee have had something to do with it?

Blockbuster trailers Trailers of potential blockbuster movies "Superman Returns" and "The Lake House" are being shown in theaters screening the big action-adventure production, "Poseidon," which opened last May 10. "The Lake House" stars Keanu Reeves and Sandra Bullock, while Brandon Routh plays the Man of Steel in "Superman Returns."

Anka's way Durable singer-composer Paul

Anka does it his way musically at the Araneta Coliseum on May 15, performing hit tunes that have remained popular for decades.

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PROMENADE
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POSEIDON 10:30, 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10 PG-13
POSEIDON 11:10, 1:30, 3:50, 6:10, 8:30, 10:50 PG-13
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 11:45, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30 PG-13
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MAY 12 & 13, 2006 JAYA OVER JOYED 9:00PM
MAY 15, 2006 JENNYLYN MERCADO 8:00PM
THEATRE MALL
EVERY MONDAY DANCE NIGHT 7:00PM
MAY 10, 11, 12, 13, 2006 TIPA NYOY VOLANTE 9:00PM
PROMENADE GREENHILLS
MAY 20 & 27, 2006 WERE STILL HOT "THE MUSICAL" 6:00PM
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MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
POSEIDON 12:10, 2:35, 5:00, 7:25, 9:50 PG-13
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 1:35, 4:30, 7:25, 10:30 PG-13
POSEIDON 12:50, 3:15, 5:40, 8:05, 10:30 PG-13
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:10 PG-13

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City Tel. No: 8981440-41
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG-13 12:45, 3:30, 6:15, 9:00
POSEIDON PG-13 1:25, 3:45, 6:05, 8:25
POSEIDON PG-13 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG-13 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
AQUAMARINE G 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50
POSEIDON PG-13 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10
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Special thanks to: Ayala Malls, Cebu Pacific, The Travel Club, Club Noah, and others.

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G1	GLORIETTA 1	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 POSEIDON	3 REINCARNATION	4 POSEIDON	ALABANG TOWN CENTER JAMMIN with DISNEY Fashion Show May 13 & 14, 2006	
		4 SENTINEL	5 AQUAMARINE	6 POSEIDON	7 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3		
G4	GLORIETTA 4	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 POSEIDON	3 POSEIDON	4 SUBMERGED	MARKET! MARKET! Tribute to Moms May 15, 2006	
		4 SENTINEL	5 AQUAMARINE	6 POSEIDON	7 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3		
GB1	GREENBELT 1	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 POSEIDON	3 POSEIDON	4 SUBMERGED	Dinner Theater May 9 & 16, 2006	
		4 SENTINEL	5 AQUAMARINE	6 POSEIDON	7 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3		
GB3	GREENBELT 3	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 POSEIDON	3 POSEIDON	4 SUBMERGED	Registration is now ongoing for Ayala Museum's Summer Art Festival Workshop 2006 For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 loc 29 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org	
		4 SENTINEL	5 AQUAMARINE	6 POSEIDON	7 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3		
ATC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 POSEIDON	3 POSEIDON	4 SUBMERGED	"IN BITUIN... For The First Time" starring Ms. Bituin Escalante Special Guest: Mr. Mon David May 12 & 13	
		4 SENTINEL	5 AQUAMARINE	6 POSEIDON	7 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3		
ACC	AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 POSEIDON	3 POSEIDON	4 SUBMERGED	Ayala MUSEUM Registration is now ongoing for Ayala Museum's Summer Art Festival Workshop 2006 For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 loc 29 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org	
		4 SENTINEL	5 AQUAMARINE	6 POSEIDON	7 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3		
M2	MARKET! MARKET!	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 POSEIDON	3 POSEIDON	4 SUBMERGED	Asia's Nightingale Lani Misalucha A Special Concert only at Ayala Malls	
		4 SENTINEL	5 AQUAMARINE	6 POSEIDON	7 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3		

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Glorietta Activity Center May 21, 6pm (Sunday)
Customer Service Hotline: 752-7272

Mother's Day letter from Amalia Fuentes

IT'S MOTHER'S DAY ON SUNDAY. AND NOT a day goes by that I don't think of my mom. I really miss her and Mother's Day only serves

to highlight that.

For those of you who are fortunate enough to still have your moms around, make an ef-

fort to reach out to them instead of the other way around. Mothers shouldn't have to bend over backwards to be close to their children. They're older and they may break.

With that in mind, I am sharing with you the letter of Tita Nena (a.k.a. Amalia Fuentes), her reaction to one of my columns.

Beneath her strong words is a mother's soft heart. I love Liezl like a sister. I don't want her to have the same regrets as I do - because I left words unsaid and things undone when my mom was still around.

DOLLY WOOD



Dolly Ann Carvajal

I'm sure she knows I mean well by printing her mom's letter. I hope that her love for her mom will prevail, even just to make Tita Nena happy on Mother's Day.

Sometimes, we don't have to give up or give in; we just have to give way.

Dearest Dolly Ann,

Thanks for your kind thoughts about me that came out in your Philippine Daily

Inquirer column. I am happy that you have come into your own as one of the more credible show biz writers in your widely read column.

But more than that, I am glad that you have acknowledged in a column item, that you actually miss your mom's sermons, "in a way that you never thought you would." Your mom was one of my dearest friends. I am sure wherever she is, she will be very happy reading this gesture of appreciation of her role in your life.

Sad to say, my daughter Liezl, who is your good friend, has not given me the same appreciation and honor. It is for this reason that I am writing to you to explain further the points I am raising about Liezl and Albert.

I have decided to break my silence once again, on this Albert and Liezl union. Yes this has been going on since time "immemorial" (to use Albert's own words in his text message to you) but it is actually them, Albert and Liezl, who have, since time "immemorial" continuously and consistently been bringing up their hard life in the US in their interviews. I am speaking again if only to let the public know the truth about this supposedly "fairy-tale romance" of Albert and Liezl.

They always mention that they went through a lot of hardships when they eloped. By continuously repeating this statement, they are actually putting me in a bad light because it gives the impression that I allowed my only daughter to go through the "hardships" that they so seem to enjoy talking about.

Liezl eloped when she was 18 and [did] not finish school. Albert was an illegal alien in the US with no permanent job.

So what did they expect when they eloped? It is true that they went through hardships. It is also probably true that they had to sleep on the floor at that time. But these things were experienced by Liezl only during the three-month period of their elopement.

This sad experience of Albert and Liezl in terms of their hardships in the early stage of their marriage should actually be a lesson to everyone not to get married young—especially if they are not financially prepared to do so. No well-meaning parent would want their children to marry young especially when they have not finished school and are ill prepared to marry.

Liezl, in the 18 years that I took care of her, has lived a comfortable life. I have provided her a good education, the comforts of a home, and whatever else a child needed for a happy life.

When she finally returned to me after three months, I accepted her and Albert into my home without questions.

They lived with me in my house in San Francisco and they did not have to pay me a single cent while they were staying with me. And up to now, I have, in no instance, denied them my help whenever they came to me for assistance. So it really pains me, that I am put in a bad light whenever they tell their story.

My warmest regards to you and all the best to you always.

Love,
Tita Nena

Boracay boo-boo

STARSTRUCK hopeful turned sexy actress Katrina Halili made a boo-boo during a Smart event in Boracay. Imagine, she asked the audience to vote for her via text through Globe and Sun for their "Most Sexy Star" pro-



AMALIA Fuentes breaks her silence—once again.

PDI PHOTO



"LIEZL and Albert Martinez's hardships should serve as a lesson," said Tita Nena.

PDI PHOTO



IZA Calzado



IAN Veneracion



KATRINA Halili

mo. The people from Smart were floored! Was that an honest mistake or was she trying to be funny? How could it have slipped Katrina's mind that those three telecommunication companies are staunch competitors? I'm sure SMART will invite smarter guests as halili for Katrina in their next affair.

Brent's side

BRENT Javier's manager Sheryl Reyes texted me to clarify the item I wrote about Brent and SM.

According to her text: "Brent was hired in June 2005 for a three-month campaign of SM's Surplus shop. It was on trial [basis] only. Brent, Jaio San Jose of SM and I had a written contract that it would only be for three months. Verbally, we agreed that if Brent were effective as their endorser then we would negotiate his standard endorsement rate and would do a new shoot."

"Jaio called me, but we didn't agree on the budget so there was no new pictorial. Obviously, she was disappointed and she had to produce a picture of Brent for the billboard of Surplus. To my surprise, she used Brent's old photo for 10 months without pay—which is unfair."

"I am planning to press charges. Jaio is liable because she's the signatory in the 'three-month trial campaign.' A picture paints a thousand words. But in Brent and SM's case, it paints hundreds and thousands of pesos! The campaign has turned into a pain!"

Maegan's two Shawns

MY INFANTICIPATING "sis" Maegan Aguilar texted me this clarification: "SisS the dad of my coming baby is Shawn Eicholz. I have an ex who's also named Shawn (Genomal), remember? He's in India but his family is here. They might think I'm having a baby with their son! Hahaha!"

For heaven's namesake!

Kitchen reunion

AN INSIDER tipped me off that Iza Calzado and Ian Veneracion were extra chummy during the out-of-town taping of "Mobile Kusina."

Iza's boyfriend and Ian's wife need not be alarmed though. It seemed the two were only rekindling their friendship—not playing with fire!

Et cetera

I'M EXTREMELY delighted to announce that I'll be a guest co-host again on "ETK" this Saturday, 4:30 p.m. on ABS-CBN 2. Working with Ogie Diaz, Toni Gonzaga and the wonderful staff is its own reward.

Catch "Entertainment Konek" so you can connect the dots in the show biz scene

Jaya celebrates

CATCH the Queen of Soul, Jaya, in her concert "Overjoyed" at the Music Museum on May 12 and 13. Marking her 10th year in show biz, the concert celebrates new beginnings as she awaits the coming of her first-born in August.

Joining her are Janno Gibbs, Allan K, Jay-R, The Opera and her mom Elizabeth Ramsey. Tickets available at Ticketworld outlets, National Bookstore and at the gate

For feedback e-mail wateringholeshangri-la@yahoo.com

MMTA

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MOVIE GUIDE

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2 (DOLBY)	POSEIDON PG13
3 (DOLBY)	MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG13
4 (DOLBY)	POSEIDON PG13
PREMIERE	
(DOLBY)	THE WILD GP



(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

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3 (DOLBY)	THE WILD
4 (DOLBY)	M. I. - 3
5 (DOLBY)	POSEIDON
6 (DOLBY)	M. I. - 3
7 (DOLBY)	POSEIDON
8 (DOLBY)	REINCARNATION
9 (DOLBY)	SILENT HILL
10 (DOLBY)	APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR



(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

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Movie Theatres of the New Millennium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

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4 (DOLBY)	SUBMERGED

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Bian) tel. (049) 4111146

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3 (DOLBY)	POSEIDON
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Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel (075) 568.6771

1 (DOLBY)	M. I. - 3
2 (DOLBY)	ICE AGE-2
3 (DOLBY)	WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

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3 (DOLBY)	BANDIDAS
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Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

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3 (DOLBY)	THE WILD

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Gapan)

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Lianas Cinema (Pasig) tel 640.4748

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2 (DOLBY)	WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276

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2 (DOLBY)	SLITHER
3 (DOLBY)	PLEASE CALL
4 (DOLBY)	PLEASE CALL

Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	M. I. - 3
2 (DOLBY)	POSEIDON
3 (DOLBY)	SHE'S THE MAN
4 (DOLBY)	SUBMERGED

Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

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3 (DOLBY)	SLITHER
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2 (DOLBY)	M. I. - 3
3 (DOLBY)	THE WILD
4 (DOLBY)	POSEIDON



(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150

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4 (DOLBY)	POSEIDON
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3 (DOLBY)	POSEIDON
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4 (DOLBY)	REINCARNATION
5 (DOLBY)	SLITHER



(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

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3 (DOLBY)	APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR

Center Mall Cinema

Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074) (444)9346

1 (DOLBY)	M. I. - 3
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Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

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2 (DOLBY)	POSEIDON
3 (DOLBY)	SILENT HILL
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Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

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WHICH WOMAN COMPLETES THE IMPOSSIBLE MISSION?

TOM CRUISE



MICHELLE MONAGHAN MAGGIE Q KERI RUSSELL

MissionImpossible.com

2ND BLOCKBUSTER WEEK!

Distributed by Solar Entertainment Corporation

PG-13

WHAT'S INSIDE

P8-B south
expressway
rehab
pushed back
to July /B3

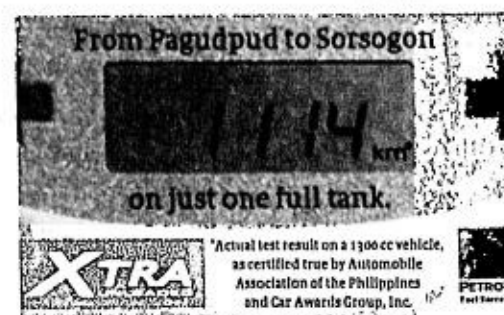
Farm output
seen
growing 5%
in first half /B6

BUSINESS

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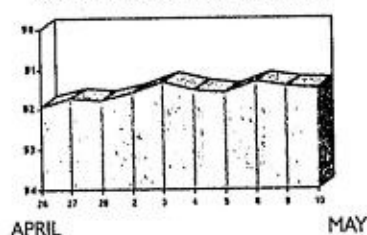
Editor Raul O. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

Text us your feedback: Inquirer biz name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph



Exports swelled to 6-year high in March

INDICATORS CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 51.50 = \$

As of 5 p.m., May 10, 2006

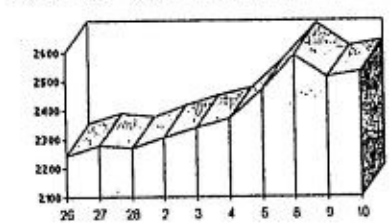
Y 110.72 = \$

As of 5 p.m., May 10, 2006

GOLD: \$702.00-702.50

per ounce Hong Kong, May 10, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares close 0.69% higher



SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY
closed 0.69 percent higher on
the back of solid exports data
and interest in blue chips such

as Ayala Corp., dealers said.

They said the modest rebound after
heavy losses Tuesday and even bigger gains
Monday suggested there could be a further
upside, although overall the market looks
set for a period of consolidation.

The composite index rose 17.26 points at

SHARES/B3

Electronics demand drives up trade by 25.8% to \$4.1B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S EXPORTS GREW 25.8 PERCENT YEAR-ON-YEAR in March, hitting its highest growth in six years, driven largely by strong global demand for electronics.

The National Statistics Office yesterday reported that earnings from exports reached \$4.11 billion in March compared with the \$3.268 billion recorded during the same month last year.

The 25.8-percent rise in exports was also the first time since July 2002 that the country recorded a growth of more than 20 percent, the NSO said.

"This is definitely good news as this keeps us on track of our full-year export growth target," said Dennis Arroyo, director for policy and planning of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

Arroyo noted that the country's export performance in March brought the average growth for the first quarter of the year to 13.8 percent, much higher than the 8-percent growth target set for

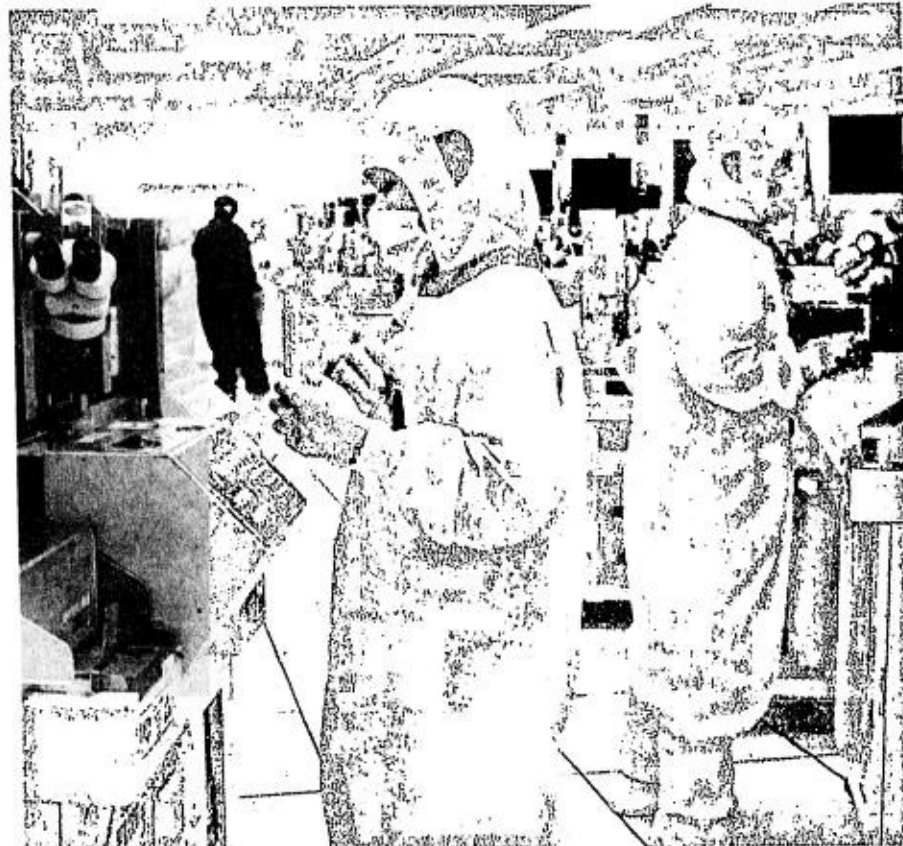
the whole of 2006.

Exports registered a growth of 14.9 percent in February, and 0.7 percent in January.

NSO data showed that trade in electronics, the country's major export product, grew 24.7 percent to \$2.706 billion. The electronics sector accounted for 65.8 percent of the country's total export earnings for March.

Ernie Santiago, executive director of the Semiconductor and Electronics Industry of the Philippines Inc. (SEIPI), told the INQUIRER that the sector was projecting a rosy picture for 2006.

Santiago noted that consumer demand for electronics products was likely to sustain its upward trend for the whole year.



A TECHNICIAN in a sterile suit monitors an automated assembly line for semiconductors in Laguna. The electronics sector accounted for 65.8 percent of the country's total export earnings for March.

POI PHOTO

EXPORTS/B3

Foreign direct investments inflow up 22% in Jan-Feb

By Doris C. Dumlaog

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS IN the Philippines registered a net inflow \$344 million in the first two months, 22 percent higher than the \$282-million yield a year ago, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

For February alone, net FDI flows amounted to \$82 million versus the \$25 million of the same month last year.

"The rise in FDIs during the two-month period was traced to the more than 600 percent rise in the 'other capital' account, as it reversed to a net inflow of \$266 million," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

The "other capital" account essentially represents inter-company accounts between investee companies and their corresponding foreign direct investors.

There was likewise a surplus of \$62 million in fresh net equity capital, mostly coming from the United States and Japan, and channeled mostly to the manufacturing and real estate sectors.

"The sustained equity capital inflows during the period, though lower than last year's, reflect investors' positive perception of the country following the government's efforts to improve its fiscal position and improve the country's macroeconom-

ic fundamentals," Tetangco said.

As opposed to mere investment pledges, the BSP's report on FDIs is based on actual inflows recorded in the country's balance of payments which, in turn, captures the foreign exchange transactions between the local economy and the rest of the world.

Unlike portfolio inflows, which are more volatile, FDIs represent direct eq-

FOREIGN/B3

An introduction to the power circle.

5



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The BMW 520d offers the driving comfort and equipment level typical of the BMW 5 Series.

The new BMW 5 Series. Executive Arrival.



JFC sets overseas business expansion plans

Profit up 25% in Q1 despite slower industry growth

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

JOLLIBEE FOODS CORP., THE COUNTRY'S largest fast-food chain, is planning to diversify into new brands overseas, particularly India and China, for future growth.

Company chair Tony Tan Caktiong disclosed this plan yesterday as Jollibee reported a 25-percent growth in its first quarter net income to P448.7 million from year-ago's P358.3 million.

Revenue rose 16 percent to P7.6 billion from P6.5 billion, while system-wide retail sales rose 15.2 percent to P10.4 billion in the first quarter from P9 billion in the same period last year.

"The food service industry in the Philippines grew slightly in the first quarter of 2006, as consumers visited food service stores only at the same frequency as last year, which was a difficult year. Fortunately, we were able to grow our business by improving our products and service and this was made possible through the hard work of our people," Tan Caktiong said.

On the company's expansion plan, Tan Caktiong said Jollibee was exploring possible acquisitions in the fast-food segment in India and China. He said the company was looking at other types of food businesses that might include noodle fast-food chains and bakeshops.

He said the Jollibee group might acquire a food chain brand in India this year.

Jollibee has been in talks with New Delhi family restaurant Nirula's for possible acquisition but negotiations were aborted after the Indian firm sold out to another company.

In China, Jollibee is expanding its existing Yonghe King brand and is open to new acquisitions.

Jollibee is set to open its first store in a key



CUSTOMERS wait in line before a Jollibee counter in Manila. The company is now exploring possible acquisitions in the fast-food segment in India and China.

city in the southern part of China. Currently, the fast-food king is studying possible locations in economic zone Shenzhen, communications hub Guangzhou and tourist destination Shanghai.

In the United States, the Jollibee group will open a new Red Ribbon store in the East Coast in October.

The Jollibee group reported a 10.6 percent growth in revenue last year to P29 billion from last year's P26.2 billion. Total system-wide sales—or sales of both company-owned and franchised stores—grew 12.1 percent to P39.8 billion.

In terms of group sales, Jollibee sales grew 8.1 percent; Chinese fast-food brand Chowking, 13.1 percent; pasta and pizza chain Greenwich, 5.9 percent, and China-based

brand Yonghe King, 43.2 percent. The newly acquired Red Ribbon Bakeshop brand pitched in 1.6 percent to the total system wide sales.

Cost of sales increased by 10 percent to P23.3 billion in 2005 with depreciation and amortization swelling by 23.1 percent.

Other operating income fell 9 percent to P121.3 million due to forex losses incurred and lower management fees in 2005.

General and administrative expenses rose 17.2 percent to P2.9 billion. Advertising and promotion ballooned by 16 percent to P847.9 million while income tax provisions last year also increased by 20.4 percent due to higher income booked by the group and the corresponding increase in corporate taxes to 35 percent from 32 percent.

JUST BETWEEN US GIRLS, THAT PUBLICLY listed I-Bank being courted for CASH acquisition by the much bigger and older Union Bank, has a little problem among its stockholders.

Word has it that Enrique Razon, founder of the port service operator ICTSI, who is one of the major stockholders of I-Bank, wanted to sell his holdings.

Joining him in the sale are stockbroker Wilson Sy (Wealth Securities) and the Lanuza group (Philreality).

Together the three groups comprise the majority in I-Bank. And this was the reason why Union Bank offered a price of P45 per share, compared to I-Bank's IPO price of only P16 per.

On the other side of table are the groups of Ben Tiu (steel business) and Ramon Sy (representing I-Bank management), who are trying to block the Union Bank offer by organizing their own takeover party.

From what I gathered, I-Bank is going through a little skirmish between two of its major stockholders.

It sounds familiar, because it's exactly the same situation in that bank that still holds some P20 billion of the funds of millions of working class members of the SSS and the GSIS members—none other than Equitable PCI Bank.

With its fragmented stock holdings, without a single stockholder having clear majority control, EPCIB is also a prime candidate for acquisition. I know personally that a number of big banks, both local and foreign, conducted internal studies on acquiring it.

EPCIB only differs from I-Bank in that, while I-Bank is getting an attractive offer, the EPCIB suitor, the SM group of mall operator Henry Sy, wants to get the bank for a song.

What explains the disparity? EPCIB is a bigger bank than I-Bank. EPCIB is the industry leader in the OFW remittance business. It has more branches than I-Bank, both here and abroad. Why is EPCIB getting basement bargain treatment from the SM group?

I can only think of one explanation: The SM group is using political connections for its plan to take over EPCIB, through, for instance, the two "godfathers" who are close to somebody in the Palace.

Anyway, getting the raw end of the deal are NOBODYS. They are the ignorant members of the SSS and the GSIS. What a shame!

PFIZER, the world's biggest drug company, wrote me to answer the column last May 2. Here is the letter, signed by Karen Villanueva, corporate affairs director, in full:

"For your kind information, the lawsuit against PTC and BFAD was filed after lengthy negotiations initiated by Pfizer failed to ensure that its intellectual property rights would be enforced and that the authenticity of the proposed imported product would be guaran-

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

ted. The approval granted, allowed sourcing Norvasc from the authorized distributors in India and Pakistan, raising serious questions about the genuineness and integrity of the product sought to be imported.

"If you are not aware yet, in the Philippines, importation and use of commercial samples of patented compound for the purpose of seeking registration thereof are not allowed. Thus, Pfizer was constrained to seek the assistance of the courts to ensure that this violation is not repeatedly done. You can refer to the case record as your reference for this subject as the same is accessible to the public.

"It might also interest you to note that PTC was able to register Norvasc in only three months, not 18 months as claimed. Thus, the accusation that Pfizer seeks to maintain monopoly of Norvasc 18 months after the expiration of the said product's patent is actually baseless.

"Despite the above and the violation having already [been] committed, Pfizer is still continuing its efforts to seek a positive resolution [of] this matter that will guarantee... patients' access to legitimate Pfizer medicines while also ensuring that the rights of patent holders, local and multinational, under Philippine laws, are upheld.

"Regarding the statement on the difference in pricing of Norvasc in the Philippines compared to other Asian countries, we believe that Pfizer products are appropriately priced and reflect the value that these bring to patients. Norvasc is in fact moderately priced in the Philippines. Its price is in the mid-range among the 20 most popular anti-hypertensive medications available in the market today.

"Prices of medicine vary from one country to another, just as prices of sugar, rice and power, for example, are quite different in the Philippines compared with other countries in Asia. Pricing can be influenced by various factors including fluctuation of currency exchange rates, taxes to import medicines, cost of manufacturing inputs, domestic inflation rate, local competitive conditions within the industry, and a public health insurance system that could subsidize the cost of medicines.

"Pfizer has also established innovative patient programs that improve access to its life-saving medicines such as Norvasc by providing substantial discounts and relevant disease management information to benefit tens of thousands of Filipino patients nationwide."

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	6.9	6.9	6.5	6.7	197,000
Banko de Oro Union Bank	38	38	38	38	508,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	68	68.5	68	68	1,739,000
China Banking Corp.	885	885	885	890	1,050
Clystate Savings Bank	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	500
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.45	0.45	0.44	0.44	4,420,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	72	72.5	72	72.5	161,800
International Exch. Bank	40	40	39.5	39.5	135,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	45	45	44	44.5	664,800
Philippine National Bank	38	38	37.5	37.5	110,900
Phil. Savings Bank	39.5	40	39.5	40	8,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	95,200
Security Bank Corp.	46	46	46	46	57,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	0.77	0.77	0.76	0.76	342,800
Bankard Inc.	32	32	32	32	10,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	3370	3400	3370	3400	260
Manulife Financial Corp.	1	1.02	1	1.02	940,000
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	210	210	210	210	2,840
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	1.28	1.34	1.28	1.32	6,757,000
Ivantage Corp.					
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
First Gen Corp.	46.5	48.5	46.5	48.5	3,200,600
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	14.25	14.75	14.25	14.5	1,677,500
Manila Electric Co. A	21	21.75	21	21.75	222,300
Manila Electric Co. B	7.7	7.8	7.6	7.7	901,600
Manila Water Co. Inc.	4.8	4.85	4.75	4.8	3,106,000
Petron Corp.	0.205	0.22	0.205	0.22	400,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	1	1.18	1	1.16	5,912,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy					
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	51,000
CADP Group Corp.	2.8	3.1	2.8	3.1	85,000
Cen Azucar de Taria	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	24.5	26	24.5	24.75	114,800
Jollibee Foods Corp.	37	37.5	37	37.5	1,097,100
RFM Corp.	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	380,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3.15	3.3	3.15	3.3	2,346,000
San Miguel Corp. A	84	84	82.5	83	86,100
San Miguel Corp. B	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	268,400
Tanday Holdings Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	10,000
Phil Tob Fide Cur & Redry	23.5	24	23.5	23.75	4,503,100
Universal Robina Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	230,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.38	4,510,000
Southeast Asian Cement	1.9	1.94	1.88	1.94	5,119,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	30,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.3	5,858,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	1.6	1.66	1.6	1.6	219,000
Republic Cement Corp.					
CHEMICALS					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	8,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	100,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.1	0.105	0.1	0.1	6,400,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	1,500,000
Stenel Manufacturing	0.54	0.55	0.54	0.54	520,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	70,000,000
Ayala Corp.	450	457.5	450	455	183,440
Abotiz Equity Ventures	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	485,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.025	9,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.55	5,900,000
APC Group Inc.	0.235	0.25	0.23	0.25	9,700,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	22,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.08	1.04	1.06	5,685,000
ATR Holdings Inc.	2	2.2	2	2.2	142,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.08	1.1	1.06	1.1	120,000
Benres Holdings Corp.	1.26	1.3	1.24	1.26	34,050,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.95	5	4.8	4.9	4,376,000
Fluorocarb Corp.	3.75	3.8	3.7	3.75	2,030,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.62	1.66	1.52	1.64	311,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.7	1,000,000
Pacific	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	6,220,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.215	0.215	0.21	0.215	113,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	120,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.56	0.57	0.56	0.57	26,700,000
Sinophill Corp.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	104,170
SM Investments Corp.	250	250	248	250	3,300,000
Uni Resources & Holdings Co	0.07	0.07	0.0675	0.0675	3,320,000
Wellx Industries Inc.	0.125	0.13	0.12	0.13	3,320,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	14.25	15	14.25	14.75	5,975,800
Belle Corp.	1.32	1.42	1.3	1.42	37,118,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.32	1,050,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.34	2.36	2.3	2.36	248,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.84	1.86	1.8	1.8	128,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.215	0.215	950,000
Elber Realty Developers Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	80,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.69	0.69	14,980,000
Angsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	0.03	0.08	0.08	0.08	210,000
Ever-Goleco Resources	0.71	0.71	0.68	0.68	6,600,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.72	1.8	1.72	1.75	180,000
Fluorocarb Land Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	4,443,000
Goleco Land Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	100,000
Goleco Land Inc. B	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	39,000,000
Interport Res.	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	65,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	450,000
Flu-Estate Land Inc.	0.62	0.62	0.58	0.59	1,250,000
Mega Pacific Corp.	1.32	1.36	1.3	1.36	21,067,000
MFC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.27	33,420,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	150,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	2,640,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.33	0.33	0.31	0.32	767,000
SM Development Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	8,893,000
Unwired Holdings Inc.	6.6	6.7	6.5	6.7	1,870,000
Unwired Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.12	
SERVICE MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14.5	15.25	14.5	15	372,700
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.24	1.26	1.22	1.26	13,527,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1035	1085	1035	1080	88,320
Philippine Tel. Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.25	1.25	9,071,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2150	2150	2100	2130	133,460
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.23	0.235	3,850,000
Imperial Res.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	200,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	500,000
Isim Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	100,000
Muscom Semiconductors Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	14,000
Transpacific Broadband	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1,000
Philweb Corp.	0.028	0.028	0.027	0.028	152,800,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	3.9	3.1	3.05	3.1	197,000
Abotiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	100,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.5	1,509,500
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	10,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	3,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Lalure & Resorts Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.62	1.68	783,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	50,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.62	0.65	0.6	0.6	3,460,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.2	46,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroscala Corp.	2.26	2.6	2.26	2.6	6,894,000
Paxys Inc.	11	12	10.75	12	2,498,100
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	3.85	4.4	3.85	4.35	21,800,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	3.85	4.4	3.85	4.4	10,029,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	253,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8	8.2	8	8.2	4,563,000
Benquet Corp. A	31	31	31	31	71,000
Benquet Corp. B	1.9	2.16	1.9	2.16	793,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.39	19,510,000
Lapanto Cons. Mng. Co. A	0.41	0.42	0.41	0.41	29,920,000
Lapanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.026	0.027	0.026	0.027	345,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	55,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	503,000,000
Omico Corp.	4.4	4.8	4.4	4.75	20,343,000
Philux Mining Corp. A	30	30	29.5	30	19,334,000
Philux Mining Corp. B	30	30	29.5	30	830,900
Semirara Mining Corp.	0.45	0.46	0.41	0.41	1,000,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.65	0.65	0.61	0.62	1,450,000
Vulcan Ind'l					
OIL					
Basic Consolidated, Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	5,330,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	395,600,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	168,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.32	1.38	1.32	1.34	8,540,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.32	1.38	1.32	1.34	4,250,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	12	14	12	14	2,578,400
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	8,200,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ARS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	15	15.5	15	15.25	425,100

P8-B south expressway rehab pushed back to July

Exports...

From page B1

"Products like laptop computers, mobile phones, digital television, IPODs and pocket-sized MP3 players were the major drivers of growth in electronics exports," Santiago said. "More people are buying cell phones, and households are replacing their analog televisions with digital."

Arroyo cited a report by the US-based Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA) that worldwide sales of semiconductors registered a 7.3-percent year-on-year growth in the first three months of the year. In Asia Pacific alone, sales grew 13 percent largely due to increase in demand for cellular phones.

Aside from electronics, the garments sector also recorded higher growth last March. The NSO said export of garments and clothing accessories reached \$194.29 million, or 29.6 percent higher than last year's.

Arroyo said the positive performance of the garments sector, which accounted for 4.7 percent of export earnings for March, proved that the lifting of the quota system did not adversely affect its income generation. The quota system, which was removed starting January this year by the World Trade Organization, gave Filipino exporters assured foreign markets for garments.

With the stiff competition brought by Chinese manufacturers of low-end garments, Arroyo said, Filipino garment makers were able to adjust by shifting to the production of high-end clothing.

Other top exports for March were petroleum products (\$90.28 million), coconut oil (\$66.92 million), wiring sets used for land, water and air vehicles (\$63.51 million), woodcrafts and furniture (\$45.94 million), cathodes of refined copper (\$44.42 million), bananas (\$34.10 million) and metal components (\$26.38 million).

The biggest destinations for Philippine exports for March were the United States, Japan, Netherlands, China, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Taiwan, Germany and Thailand.

Arroyo said the result of first-quarter exports indicated that the country was capable of comfortably meeting, if not surpassing, the 8-percent full-year growth target.

Economic managers earlier this year scaled down the 2006 export growth target from the original 10 percent.

Trade groups fear commercial disruption, affecting a fourth of RP exports

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE P8-BILLION REHABILITATION OF the South Luzon Expressway will begin in June, or in July at the latest, instead of next week as previously announced, according to the firm in charge of the project.

In a press statement, the South Luzon Tollway Corp. (SLTC) said that major repair of the Marcos-era highway will begin "only after ongoing, advance work on alternate roads and auxiliary lanes have been completed."

The company added that it will also ensure the public will be properly informed of the traffic procedures to be implemented before starting the rehabilitation work.

SLTC made the announcement after business groups—mostly based in

Muntinlupa, Laguna and Cavite—aired their concerns over potential disruptions to commerce brought on by the repair work.

An estimated one-fourth of the country's total exports are transported via the highway, which serves as the main artery between Metro Manila and the industrial areas of southern Luzon.

Also, about 150,000 vehicles ferry over a million passengers via SLEX everyday, while over 60 percent of all produce in Luzon passes through the expressway en route to markets, air and sea ports.

Responding to the businessmen's concerns, SLTC president Mark Dumol said that major work will start by July at the latest, adding that the traffic management plan for the construction period has already been drawn out.

Shortly after the Laguna Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) learned that the SLEX reconstruction would begin on May 16, the business group called for a public forum to clarify the issue with SLTC.

About 250 officers of various companies in Laguna and Cavite industrial parks, transport groups, homeowners associations, and small and medium enterprise owners and traffic task force officers attended the forum.

LCCI president Robert Chan, who also chairs the Laguna Traffic Task Force, recommended that SLTC's traffic management plan be reviewed in consultation with the traffic task forces of Muntinlupa and Laguna.

Chan pointed out that the SLEX road system affects not only Alabang,

a business center with several malls, but also at least six industrial estates along its route, which produces around 26 percent of the country's total exports.

During the forum, Semiconductor and Electronics Industries Manufacturers Association chair Benny Catahan said disruption in the transport schedule of incoming and outgoing cargo may adversely affect the operations of their member companies and result in reduced export earnings.

To ease their concerns, SLTC officials presented the traffic management plan, which covers rerouting options, particularly in the Alabang viaduct area where most of the traffic congestion is expected to occur during the SLEX reconstruction.

Shares close...

From page B1

2,529.49, near its day-high of 2,531.01. It hit a low of 2,497.33. Volume was 2.48 billion shares worth P2.27 billion (\$44.5 million).

The broader all-shares index advanced 10.39 points to 1,556.95.

Gainers led losers 64 to 36 with 50 stocks unchanged.

The peso was at 51.54 to the dollar in mid-day trade.

The market on Tuesday ended a five-day winning streak, taking a breather after rising to its best level in nearly seven years.

Nina Tinio of Unicapital Securities said the trade data boosted investor sentiment.

"Investors were encouraged by the strong exports data," Tinio said. "It is one of the indications that things are looking good for the Philippine economy."

Gains in Globe Telecom and Ay-

ala Land, both subsidiaries of Ayala Corp., helped push the main index higher.

Globe closed up P45 at P1,080 after Citigroup upgraded its recommendation on the stock to "buy" from "hold," as well as its target price to P1,200 from P890, following the firm's strong first-quarter performance.

Ayala Land gained 50 centavos to P14.75 ahead of its quarterly results on Friday. Ayala Corp. ended steady at P455.

Top-traded Philippine Long Distance Telephone retreated P20 to P2,130, extending Tuesday's drop after the company reported a 9-percent drop in first-quarter net profit.

San Miguel A-shares were steady at P64 and San Miguel B-shares were also unchanged at P83 after its first quarter report.

AFP

Foreign direct...

From page B1

uity investments in brick-and-mortar ventures that are usually labor- and capital-intensive, like manufacturing, mining, property development and business process outsourcing.

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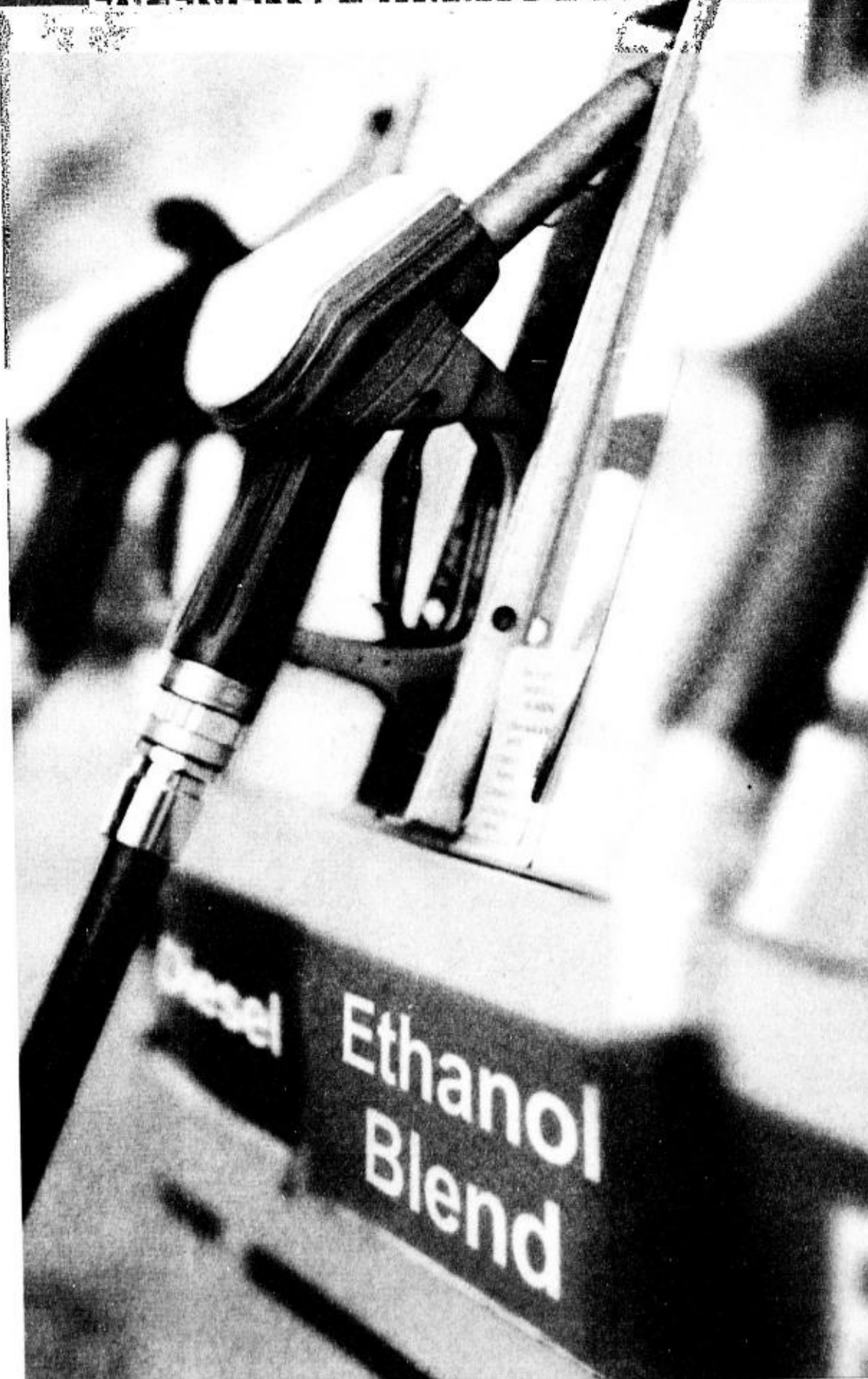
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• Ford Cebu, Trunk Line: 221-1111, Fax No. 221-1111 • Ford Bacolod, Trunk Line: 333-1111, Fax No. 333-1111 • Ford Davao, Tel. No. 221-1111, Fax No. 221-1111 • Ford Cagayan de Oro, Tel. No. 221-1111, Fax No. 221-1111 • Ford Cebu, Tel. No. 221-1111, Fax No. 221-1111

Trading of Philcomsat shares suspended

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE yesterday suspended the trading of Philcomsat Holdings Corp. shares pending the approval by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) of the company's amended articles of incorporation.

PHC managed to get a new lease on life after its board on Tuesday secured the approval of the majority of the stockholders to prolong the firm's corporate life for another 50 years.

PHC was last traded on April 20 at P1 per share.

The PSE said in a circular sent to brokers that it had suspended the trading of the company's shares since the SEC had yet to approve the company's new arti-

cles of incorporation extending its corporate term.

The PSE also said it would inform the public on the developments in PHC.

PHC convened a special stockholders' meeting Tuesday at the Manila Golf and Country Club in Forbes Park.

PHC's corporate life was supposed to expire yesterday, May 10.

PHC is 80-percent owned by satellite technology pioneer Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat).

Both companies are owned by Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (POTC) whose shares were sequestered by the government in 1986 on allegations that these shares were acquired using ill-gotten wealth.

RP bond index fund launched

Portion of \$2-B fund pooled by 11 central banks

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE AYALAS' BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE islands yesterday launched a pioneering P1.4-billion ABF Philippines Bond Index Fund, which is expected to double in size within the year of its public offering.

The P1.4-billion bond index fund represents the Philippines' share of the \$2-billion Asian Bond Fund (ABF) pooled by 11 central banks in East Asia and the Pacific to boost local currency bond markets.

BPI was mandated to manage the Philippines' share of the second Asian Bond Fund or ABF2.

During the launch, BPI executive vice president and head of asset management Adelbert Legasto said the fund could easily double in a year's time, as investments from the public would augment the seed money from the central banks.

At the same time, he said the allocation for the Philippines could easily increase if the country's sovereign credit rating would improve in the future.

Given its current sovereign ratings, the allotment amounted to only P1.25 billion, dwarfed by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' \$100-million contribution to the fund. The amount, however, is expected to increase to P5 billion the issue's sovereign credit ratings would be increased to investment grade.

The fund size has grown to P1.4 billion to date due to investment earnings.

Legasto said under the mechanics of the country-specific funds, the share of the country-specific allotment from ABF2 was a function of a country's sovereign credit grade.

The Philippines is currently rated two notches below investment grade by Fitch, three notches below by Standard & Poor's and four notches below by Moody's.

ABF-PBIF is an index fund tracking the iBoxx ABF Philippine Index composed of 74 securities, including the Fixed Rate Treasury Notes and sovereign zero-coupon bonds.

"ABF-PBIF is an important piece of market infrastructure that is expected not only to promote trading and liquidity of fixed income securities, but also to improve awareness on index tracker funds," BPI said in a statement.

With a minimum investment of P100,000, ABF-PBIF allows retail investors to participate in the Philippine bond market at a low cost and enhances the global asset allocation strategies of institutional investors.

Taipan's son named Metrobank prexy

METROPOLITAN BANK AND TRUST CO. yesterday named 39-year-old Arthur Ty, son of taipan George Ty, as its new president.

In a board meeting after the bank's stockholders' meeting yesterday, former Metrobank president Antonio Abacan Jr. was elected chair while taipan George Ty moved up as chair of the Metrobank Group of Companies.

Abacan served as Metrobank president for 14 years while his successor, Arthur Ty, has worked with the bank in various capacities for over 15 years.

"In today's changing business environment, Mr. Ty's youth and energy will help bring in fresh ideas and a change in mindset that can only benefit the bank," Abacan said.

Doris C. Dumlaog



SUSTAINING GROWTH, IMPROVING EFFICIENCY

San Miguel Corp. chair Eduardo Cojuangco briefs shareholders during the company's annual stockholders' meeting. Cojuangco says the conglomerate will focus on increasing efficiency and sustaining growth this year after a series of ambitious acquisitions overseas in recent years. First quarter net income hits P2.17 billion, 7 percent higher than year-ago level.

AFP

ICTSI to expand in Poland

THE POLISH PORT OPERATION of International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) has embarked on a capacity expansion program in anticipation of increased cargo traffic in the coming months, according to the company.

In a statement, ICTSI said that its Baltic Container Terminal (BCT) in Gdynia, Poland "continues to serve new clients even as it beefs up operations and service de-

livery in anticipation of more vessel calls in the coming months."

BCT is an ICTSI subsidiary and is Poland's leading and most modern international trading gateway.

Its brisk business activity underscores the statement made earlier by ICTSI chair Enrique K. Razon Jr. that the company is looking to further expand overseas amid tepid business in the Philippines.

Daxim Lucas

Chinatrust prepares for expansion

THE PHILIPPINE UNIT OF TAIWAN Banking giant Chinatrust Commercial Bank Corp. sees itself in a strong position to expand here by buying another bank or taking over another lender's asset portfolio.

In a briefing yesterday, Chinatrust Phils. chief finance officer Jose Nerio Salamillas said: "Because of our capital, we can actually invest in whatever business we think we should be in."

A few years ago, Chinatrust bought part of ABN-AMRO's assets when the Dutch bank shut down its Philippine operations.

Like Union Bank of the Philippines, which recently forged a deal to ac-

quire International Exchange Bank, Chinatrust is overcapitalized, posting a capital adequacy ratio of 33 percent or more than three times the 10 percent minimum ratio required by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Chinatrust Phils. has a paid-up capital of about P2 billion, but its equity has now expanded to P4.4 billion because it has not remitted cash dividends to its parent bank thus growing its retained earnings, Salamillas noted.

While the bank is not actively looking for any specific bank to gobble up in the midst of a renewed merger and acquisition mania in the local banking system, Salamillas said China-

trust was on the lookout for opportunities along the way.

Over the medium term, he said expansion through acquisition in the Philippines was an option always on the table.

Chinatrust Phils. was among the first among its peers to comply with the stiffer International Accounting Standards especially since its parent bank had to consolidate the financial results of its subsidiaries.

The IAS implementation resulted in a reduction in Chinatrust Phils' retained earnings in 2004 amounting to P200 million, but Salamillas said about P70 million of this was recovered in 2005.

Doris C. Dumlaog

SM prime to open Clark ecozone mall

SM PRIME HOLDINGS INC. IS OPENING its 24th mall at the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga on Friday, as it takes advantage of the new growth corridor in the economic zone, the company said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

SM City Clark is the second of the five shopping malls that SM Prime is opening this year.

The 99,000-square meter SM City Clark along M. A. Roxas Avenue is about 80 kilometers north of Manila

and 60 km east of the Subic Bay Freeport, another major economic zone.

SM Prime will open three other malls this year, including the Mall of Asia which will start commercial operations on May 21. Other malls scheduled for opening are the SM Supercenter Frontera Verde in Pasig and SM City Lipa in Batangas.

SM Prime is expanding SM North Edsa with the construction of Annex 3. Earlier this year, it opened SM City Sta. Rosa in Laguna.

Amid golf courses, casinos, duty-free shops, and leisure estates, the two-level SM City Clark will be the newest shopping attraction at the Clark Ecozone, an investment and tourist destination.

Clark is only three-and-a-half hours away by plane from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Korea and other key Asian cities. And with the entry of budget airlines at the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport, tourist arrivals in Clark have increased.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

RIZAL EXPERIMENTAL STATION AND PILOT SCHOOL OF COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

Maybunga, Pasig City

List of Vacant Positions

(2) Teachers III: SG-12; Item Nos. TCH3-30348; 30353; Bachelor of Secondary Education or Bachelor's Degree plus 18 professional units in Education with appropriate major preparation; Two years of teaching experience; Eligibility: LET.

(1) Teacher II: SG-11; Item No. 30028; Bachelor of Secondary Education or Bachelor's Degree plus 18 professional units in Education with appropriate Major preparation; No experience required. Eligibility: LET.

(2) Teachers I: SG-10; Item Nos. TCH1-30849; 30850; Bachelor of Secondary Education or Bachelor's Degree plus 18 professional units in Education preferably major in Social Studies and PEHM; No experience required; Eligibility: LET.

(3) Crafts Education Demonstrators I; SG-10; Item Nos. CEDDI-30012; 30013; Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Education preferably Computer Literate; 1 year experience in teaching vocational course; Eligibility: LET.

(1) Guidance Counselor I: SG-10; Item No. GUIDC1-30001; Bachelor's Degree Relevant to the Job; Experience: None required; Eligibility: Career Service (Prof.) Second Level Eligibility.

(1) School Librarian I; SG-10; Item No. SL1-30003; Bachelor's of Library Science or any Bachelor's Degree Major in Library Science; No experience required; Eligibility: Teacher, Librarian.



Republic of the Philippines
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E-mail: member_relations@sss.gov.ph • Website: http://www.sss.gov.ph

Invitation to Sell Real Estate Properties

The Social Security System is inviting lot owners to submit offers to sell real estate properties in the following locations:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Marikina | 5. Iba |
| 2. Pasig | 6. Olongapo |
| 3. Dagupan | 7. Bacoor |
| 4. Malolos | 8. Iloilo |

Properties to be considered should meet the following minimum criteria:

1. Clean Transfer Certificate of Title (free from liens & encumbrances)
2. Land area should be within 1,000 sq.m. to 2,000 sq.m., except for Iba Branch with a lot area requirement of only 500 sq.m.
3. Lot frontage should not be less than 20 meters.
4. Fronting road should be developed, concrete or asphalt paved with drainage system.
5. The property should be vacant (without intruders), not prone to flooding and not a fire hazard.
6. The property should be accessible to public transportation, within commercial areas, and 2-3 kilometers from the city or town proper.

Interested lot owners may submit their proposals to Local Branch Expansion Department (LBED), 3rd Floor, SSS Main Building, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

Proposals should include the lot area; offered price; lot plan indicating lot distance to identify exact location of the property; certified true copy of TCT; tax declaration; pictures of the offered property; and comprehensive vicinity map with major landmarks. Incomplete proposals shall not be considered.

Deadline of submission of proposals shall be on 15 June 2006.

Further information or inquiries may be made to Ms. Gloria Y. Cuisia, Manager, Local Branch Expansion Department (LBED), or Engr. Gregorio S.J. Mendoza also of LBED, in the above address with telephone number 920-64-01 locals 5745 and 5747.

The SSS reserves the right to reject any or all proposals without assuming any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by the proponents in the preparation of their offers.

(Sgd.) VP AURORA E. L. ORTEGA
NCR Group Head

(Sgd.) VP JOSE B. BAUTISTA
Luzon Group Head

(Sgd.) VP EDDIE A. JARA
Visayas/Mindanao Group Head

(PDI May 11 2006)

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Republic of the Philippines
6CB-GSC-015

PURCHASE OF VARIOUS CONSTRUCTION SUPPLIES

(Name of Project)

162 items of different Construction supplies (pls see details @ www.gensantos.gov.ph and also @ www.procurementservice.org)

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City, through the CY 2006 Annual Budget intends to apply the sum of Two Million Five Hundred Fifty Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Fifty Three Pesos and 93/100 (P2,557,853.93) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Various Construction Supplies. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Purchase of Various Construction Supplies. Delivery of the GOODS is required by 30 calendar days. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsive of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Local Government Unit of General Santos City and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000.00 to the City Treasurer's Office. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested on May 16, 2006, 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon at the BAC Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon of May 30, 2006. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit equivalent to One Percent (1%) of ABC or Bank Guarantee equivalent to One and a half Percent (1½%) of ABC or Surety Bond equivalent to Two and a half Percent (2½%) of ABC or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon of May 30, 2006 at the BAC Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Bids and Awards Committee
2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City
Tel. Nos. (083) 301-0553, (083) 301-3834
Fax: (083) 301-0553
website address: www.gensantos.gov.ph

(Sgd.) NAEL JOSEPH D. CRUSPERO
BAC Chairman

(PDI May 4 & 11 2006)

ATI reports steady growth

ASIAN TERMINALS INC. SAID its decision to focus on its core business paid off in 2005.

"Focusing on its core business, your company continued to provide professional, quality service to its customers. We offered value-creating, innovative solutions which minimized costs and achieved world class productivity standards," ATI chair Bryan T. Smith told company shareholders.

ATI managed to sustain its growth and profitability despite increased energy costs and slower economic growth in 2005. The company earlier reported that last year's revenues grew 14.1 percent to Php4.1 billion and net

income for the same period increased by 78.9 percent to Php664 million.

According to Smith, growth in 2005 was achieved by consolidating resources to revolve around competencies, pursuing rightsizing measures, effecting stringent control and restructuring of certain business units.

In view of the company's strong performance, the board of ATI approved the declaration of a cash dividend of 20 centavos per share or a total of P400 million for stockholders of record as of May 26, 2006. The cash dividend shall be paid to shareholders on June 22, 2006.

CEB to start flying to Laoag

CEBU PACIFIC IS ADDING ANOTHER route to its domestic service with its three times weekly flights between Manila and Laoag City starting June 8, 2006.

The Manila-Laoag flight departs Manila every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 11:55 a.m. arriving 12:45 p.m. and departs Laoag at 1:15 p.m. arriving in Manila at 2:05 p.m.

Danilo Mojica, CEB general manager, said the Manila-Laoag service plays an important part in the airline's vision of making travel within the country a lot more affordable and convenient for both local and foreign travelers alike. Laoag, the capital of Ilocos Norte, is the province's commercial and industrial hub. The city is known for its pottery, furni-

ture and woven products and is a popular tourist destination in North Luzon.

The Manila-Laoag route will be the first destination to be regularly serviced by CEB in Northern Luzon. The route will be serviced by the airline's brand-new Airbus A319 aircraft with 150-seating capacity.

The airline will introduce its Manila-Laoag service with a "Seat Sale" and a one-way fare of only P488, almost 80-percent less than the current air fare to Laoag. The sale runs from May 10 to 17 only. Travel date for the promo is from June 8 to Oct. 19. After the Seat Sale, regular "Go" fares to Laoag start at P888 one-way, still more than 60-percent less than the current air fare.

Emperor Brandy strikes gold

NOTHING CAN BE MORE APPROPRIATE in describing Emperor Brandy's recent achievement than its tagline "Sa tootong tagumpay" (To true success). For the second time, Emperor Brandy received the prestigious Reader's Digest Trusted Brands, a region-wide survey conducted in seven markets -- Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and India -- where brands ranging from luxury goods to everyday necessities are ranked by consumers based on quality, value, trustworthiness, strong image and understanding of customer needs.

Formerly called Reader's Digest Super Brands since its inception seven years ago, the survey now puts brand integrity at the forefront by focusing on trust. Thus, the survey was renamed the "Reader's Digest Trusted Brands."

For Emperor Brandy, winning this award, not only once but twice in a row, clearly proves that it has gained the vote of confidence of Asia's consumers, a feat no other local brand in its category could claim. Under the alcoholic beverages category, Emperor Brandy shares the title of

Most Trusted Brands with foreign brands, Johnnie Walker and Fandador. And it's no wonder. Emperor Brandy has built its name on three important values: "sipag" (industry), "tiyaga" (patience/perseverance) and "responsibilidad" (responsibility). By consistently taking the higher ground, Emperor Brandy differentiated itself from the rest, blazing a trail which competition tried to follow. With the hallmarks of a leader, Emperor Brandy has won the respect and admiration of Asia's most discriminating consumers, and an award that truly reflects "tootong tagumpay".

"At the core of Emperor Brandy is our abiding commitment to excellence and respect for consumers - One look, one sip and it becomes clear to all that Emperor Brandy is a world-class product that is easily affordable; and our marketing campaigns have always emphasized good old-fashioned values. Emperor achieves marketing and critical success by remaining true to these noble principles" says Noli Galang, managing director for Emperor Brandy.

TOTO AT 14TH CONSTRUCTION SHOW CEBU

Toto Innovations on bathroom fixtures and fittings shall be featured at the 14th Construction Show Cebu on June 2 to 5 at the Cebu Trade Hall, 3/Floor SM City Cebu. Shown sealing the agreement with a handshake are (from left) Benjamin A. Ducut, president of L.A. Ducut and Company Inc - the show organizer, and Gary Bogarin, manager for project sales as witnessed by Tsrina Augustine N. Tantuico, marketing officer of SMT Inc. For particulars on the 14th Construction Show Cebu, interested parties may call in Manila (02)873-8202 or 1198 or 8876 or



9047, cel (0917) 8382183 or in Cebu (032) 232-3729 or 3740 or 412-9463 or (0916) 6139179 or e-mail constructionshow@laducut.com.

MRII starts review classes

THE MANILA REVIEW INSTITUTE INC (MRII) will open review classes starting June 5 and July 3, for the November 2006 Chemical Engineering licensure examination. It will start the Master Plumber review on July 3 for the September 2006 licensure examination. It also offers regular and refresher programs for mechanical engineering, sanitary engineering, agricultural engineering, chemistry, teachers and civil service examination. MRII is at the 3rd Floor Consuelo Building, 929 Nicanor Reyes St. (formerly Morayta), Manila. Its publications, the Reviewer for Chemical Engineering Licensure Examination, 2nd Edition; Mechanical Engineering Tables and Charts, 5th Edition and Reviewer for Licensure Examination for Teachers, 4th Edition are sold at leading bookstores nationwide. For inquiries, e-mail MRII at mrii@tri-ls.com or call 735-0112 to 14.

CCS offers summer program

AS PART OF ITS SUMMER PROGRAM, CCS OFFERS A VERSATILE BAKING course that allows students to choose the kind of cakes they want to learn. From a complete five-day baking course to single-day courses that focus on particular cake types, CCS tailor fits its programs to the needs of its students. CCS Baking and Cake Decorating School's new summer schedule is as follows: May 22-26 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) - Special Baking (P14,000 for the entire course); May 22 - All Sponge Cakes (P3,000); May 23 - All Chiffon Cakes (P3,000); May 24 - All Butter Cakes (P3,000); May 25 - Cheesecakes (P3,000); May 26 - Merengues (P3,000). For reservations and inquiries, please call Avelina C. Florendo or Jun C. Florendo at 913-2527/912-1163. CCS Baking and Cake Decorating School is located at 91-8th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City. The next baking course is set on June 26-30. You may also call to arrange for a special schedule.

Sun promo now a permanent service

SUN CELLULAR'S 24/7 TEXT UNLIMITED SERVICE GETS HOTTER BY THE minute as the summer heat intensifies. Its revolutionary 24/7 Text Unlimited With A Voice, launched in February this year as a promotional offer, is now here to stay. On top of enjoying all day, all night texting, also enjoy free 1 hour local Sun-to-Sun voice calls when you load the P50 24/7 Text Unlimited card which is valid for 7 days. To experience up to 4 hours of free local Sun-to-Sun voice calls, load up the P150 24/7 Text Unlimited card which is valid for 30 days. To start enjoying the unbeatable value added to this service, just purchase any P50 or P150 24/7 Text Unlimited card and simply load it up. For more information about Sun's unlimited deals, visit its website at www.sun-cellular.com.ph or call its 24-hour hotline numbers at 395-8000.

Trianon-Melatonin-T now available

TRIANON-MELATONIN-T CAPSULES IS NOW AVAILABLE AT ALL LEADING drug stores nationwide. It helps people with sleep problems, making one enjoy a deep, restful sleep and wake-up the next day feeling better and very relaxed. People who are frequent travelers, can use Trianon-Melatonin-T supplement to hasten their sleep and ease jetlag. Because of its anti-oxidant properties, it aids our body cells to be free from radicals and oxidative damage caused by pollution, stress, and strengthens our immune system. Trianon-Melatonin-T capsule is exclusively distributed by Trianon Int'l Inc, located at 502 Narra Bldg, 2276 Pasong Tamo Extn, Makati City, with tel. nos. 815-3239 and 892-0723.



CONVERGYS RECEIVES PEZA AWARD

Convergys Corp recently received recognition as Outstanding Employer for 2005 from the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza). Convergys received the award based on the number of jobs it created the past year, as well as its high regard for the welfare of its employees. The company is now the country's largest employer of knowledge-based workers with 8,500 professionals in seven facilities nationwide.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo presented the award to Convergys Corp's executive vice president for customer care, Clint Streit in a ceremony in Malacañang Palace. With them during the awarding ceremony were (from left) Convergys director for assets management Jojo Lloren, Convergys vice president and country manager (Philippines) Marife Zamora and Trade and Industry Undersecretary Elmer Hernandez.

ProductFiles

Motorkingdom unveils Pitbull

MOTORKINGDOM CORP UNVEILS the state-of-the-art Pitbull multi-purpose vehicles - a 3 cylinder gas engine, 6 valve and 12 valve. It showcases 8 different models: the Pitvan 5-8 seater van; Pitney 14 or 18 seater jeep; Pit-up 750kg pick-up capacity; Bradpit 6 seater pick-up with canopy 750kg capacity 2X4 or 4X4; Pitboy 12 seater all-purpose transporter; Pittruck delivery aluminum truck; Pitcar 5 seater double cab commercial car and Pitstore 2 passenger rolling store customized body. Ranging from utility, family van to passenger type model and customized rolling store van for business, it gives huge savings on fuel consumption. Available in 4 modes of payment cash, financing, credit card and rent-to-own. Visit Motorkingdom Showroom 149 Yakal St., San Antonio Village Makati and 3/F Yungpangco Bldg., 339 Sen Gil Puyat Ave. Makati City. Visit its website www.motorkingdomplus.com. For inquiries, Call: 811-0170.



OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory
on the
15th Death Anniversary
of

DANIEL M. RAGASA

January 3, 1915 - May 10, 1991

To Our Everdearest Daddy:

The years that have passed have in no way diminished the pain of your loss in our midst, but we know that you are in better hands with Him, the Almighty God. For now, the memories of your goodness, your unselfish love for all of us, and our wonderful times together will fill our hearts and minds till we join you for all eternity...

We love you...

Loving wife Doring; and children Myrna, Dante, Eddie, Doris and Daisy. We request relatives, friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.



Toribio T. Capitan

b. August 7, 1941
d. May 6, 2006

Wife: Estrella M. Capitan, Eric and Rachel, Dennis and Jing, Aireen, Bong and Joan.

Grandchildren: Michael, Avian, Erielle, Johann, Joshua, Julianne, Ysabel, and Luigi

Body lies at the family residence at
15 Sheker Ave. San Miguel, Iligan City

Interment on Saturday, May 13, 2006
after 8am Mass.

Remembering Daddy

on his

FOURTH DEATH ANNIVERSARY

DANNY N. SILVA

September 5, 1948 - May 11, 2002



Holy Masses will be offered on May 11, 2006 at:

Parish of the Resurrection, Phase I, ... 5:30 a.m.;
BF Homes, Parañaque 6:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.
Sta. Clara Parish, P. Burgos, Pasay City 7:00 a.m.
St. John Bosco Parish, Makati 7:30 a.m.
Holy Family Parish, San Isidro, Makati City 6:00 a.m.
San Ildefonso Parish, Pio del Pilar, Makati City 6:00 a.m.
National Shrine of the Sacred Heart 7:00 a.m.
San Antonio Village, Makati City
Our Mother of Perpetual Help, National Shrine, ... 7:30 a.m.
Baclaran
Our Lady of La Paz Parish, Makati City 6:30 a.m.
Malate Catholic Church, M.H. del Pilar, Manila 7:00 a.m.
National Shrine of the Most Holy Rosary 6:00 a.m.
Quezon City

His family requests relatives, friends and the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul and to remember him always in their prayers.

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TURNOVER RITES

Shown from left: Dr. Butch Tamayo (Director) Univ. of Perpetual Help (UPH), Yungly L. Tamayo (Chairperson) Univ. Savings Bank, Roberto L. Tamayo (Director) UPH, Daisy M. Tamayo, Dr. Teresita T. Salazar of UPH, Michael Peter Paul Gepuela, Peter Paul Gepuela (Pres. & Chief Exec. Officer) JFG Columbarium Management Corp., Dr. Ting S. Jose VP for Operations of Arlington Memorial Chapels, Inc. (AMCI) and Julius Bautista, Branch Manager of AMC Binan, Laguna during the turnover rites of the JFG Mortuary Complex to Arlington Memorial Chapels, Inc at the Heavens' Park, Binan, Laguna on April 20, 2006.

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2 Timothy 4:7

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A loving and faithful husband to Charing

A model father to Enrico and Cynthia, Ely and Beth,

Ferdie and Odette, Jong and Christie

A caring and nurturing grandfather to Rogene, Nico, Junior, Izza,

SonnyBoy, Jolo, Julia, and Faith

Peacefully joined our Creator on 09 May 2006 at the age of 75.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.
Interment will be on the 14th of May 2006 after the 9:30 a.m. Mass.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Judge Mario M. Dizon

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on May 4, 2006.

Wish to express our deepest appreciation to all of you, our friends near and far, who sent flowers, mass cards, letters of sympathy, spent precious time with us and expressed in many other ways your love, concern and support during our time of deep sorrow.

More Classified Ads
on pages A4, A14, A18 & B4

BUSINESS

Farm output seen growing 5% in first half

Agriculture production up 3.9% in Q1, helped by big corn, rice harvests, DA says

By Christine A. Gaylican

FARM OUTPUT IN THE PHILIPPINES is expected to grow by 4.5-5 percent in the first half of this

year largely due to substantial rice and corn harvests, said Agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban.

Panganiban made the projec-

tion in a briefing yesterday after reporting that the agriculture sector, which accounts for a fifth of gross domestic product, grew 3.9 percent in the first quarter from the same quarter last year, not 5 percent as earlier reported, as the La Niña wet weather pattern boosted rice production.

Agricultural output, which also includes tropical fruit, such as co-

conuts and mangoes, fisheries and livestock, grew only 1.26 percent in the first half of 2005 after drought cut harvests.

Panganiban said the crops sub-sector, which recovered from a production slump, provided the biggest push during the period.

The aquaculture sub-sector, on the other hand, recorded a 14.37-

percent increase in the first quarter, while the fishery sector went up by 5.38 percent.

A healthy agriculture sector increases the possibility of the economy posting a GDP growth of between 5.5 percent and 6.2 percent this year.

The expected GDP growth is also anchored on strong remittances from overseas workers, which support domestic consumption.

But some analysts said growth of up to 5 percent in farming output in the first half compared with last year would be difficult.

"In order to achieve 5 percent, they would have to grow around 6 percent in the second quarter, which is nearly double what they have in the first quarter," said Kenneth Cheng, chief analyst at Informa Global Markets in Singapore.

The first-quarter expansion was slower than an earlier projection of 4.8 percent for the period given by Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri.

Last week, Neri said Philippine GDP could have grown faster than 5.5 percent in the first quarter compared to the same period



PANGANIBAN

of last year due to a boost in rice production after the La Niña weather pattern triggered above-average rain.

The government's GDP growth target received a surprise boost on Wednesday by data showing March exports jumped 26 percent to \$4.11 billion, the biggest increase since October 1999, as electronic shipments rose 25 percent.

Exports in the first quarter rose 13.8 percent, above the government's average target of 8 percent for the year. With a report from Reuters

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Shell starts selling gasoline with ethanol

By Abigail L. Ho

JUMPING ON THE ALTERNATIVE fuels bandwagon, oil refiner Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. will start selling gasoline with a 10-percent ethanol blend today.

Shell alternative fuels project manager Michael Velasco said the sale of ethanol-blended gasoline directly from its pumps was in support of the Department of Energy's Alternative Fuels Program.

This, he said, was also part of Shell's efforts to "assist the country towards energy independence, better environment quality and creation of jobs in the rural areas."

"In order to help ensure the success of the ethanol-blended gasoline in the Philippines, we have taken on our 25 years of global expertise in formulating biofuels. We have employed the best practices used in countries like Brazil, US, Sweden and Thailand, that have contributed towards making Shell the leading retailer of biofuels in the world," he said.

With today's launch, Shell becomes the second oil firm in the country to sell ethanol-blended

gasoline straight from its pumps.

New player Seaoil Petroleum Corp. started selling gasoline with a 10-percent ethanol blend in selected service stations in Metro Manila as early as August last year.

Seaoil started offering its ethanol-blended gasoline in all its stations nationwide in October 2005.

In an earlier interview, Seaoil president Glenn Yu said that since the launch of its ethanol-blended gasoline, the oil firm had already sold 2.5 million liters of the biofuel.

Ethanol-blended gasoline currently represents 5 percent of the company's total revenue, he said.

Apart from Seaoil and now Shell, industry leader Petron Corp. had also committed to eventually blend ethanol with its gasoline products, through a memorandum of understanding with San Carlos Bio-Energy Inc., a joint venture between the National Development Corp. and Bronzcoak Philippines.

The company will produce some 100,000 liters of bioethanol a day in its distillery plant by 2007.

First Gen eyes German group's stake in plant

INDEPENDENT POWER PRODUCER First Gen Corp. is eyeing the 38-percent stake of German firm STEAG AG in the 210-megawatt (MW) Mindanao coal-fired power plant in Misamis Oriental, which is expected to be placed on the auction block early next year.

During yesterday's stockholders' meeting, First Gen vice chair and chief executive Peter Garrucho said he had already expressed the company's intention to acquire the STEAG stake through communications with officials here and in Germany.

"We understand from them that they would activate the sale of their 38-percent stake once the plant is completed by the end of the year. We indicated that we'll be very interested in talking to them about that," he said.

He said that over the past three years, foreign firms such as Edison Mission, Interger and El Paso had sold their Philippine assets.

This was a major opportunity area for First Gen, he said, as the IPP aimed to further beef up its business by bidding or negotiating for stakes in power generation firms held by private companies.

As with the STEAG stake in the

Mindanao coal-fired power plant, which is still being constructed, he said First Gen would "continue to search and negotiate for such stakes."

STEAG had expressed its intention to let go of 38 percent out of the 89-percent stake it held in the Mindanao plant.

Discussions with interested parties, however, are not likely to take place until the power plant goes into commercial operation, which is scheduled for January next year.

Apart from STEAG, local firm State Investment Trust Inc. also owns part of the Mindanao plant.

Upon commercial operation, the plant is expected to augment Mindanao power supply, which teeters dangerously close to crisis levels.

Mindanao's system gross reserve has not been enough to meet the 11.9-percent load following frequency regulation and spinning reserve requirement since the last quarter of 2005, according to data from the National Power Corp.

From 2007 to 2008, however, power supply should stabilize with the commissioning of the Mindanao coal-fired power facility.

Abigail L. Ho

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Fortune smiles on high-profile mom's business



RUDY ESPERAS

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Rudy Esperas

SHE'S BUSY AS A BEE. Fortune Aleta Ledesma is not only honorary consul of Monaco, an active member of charitable groups, a businesswoman (she's into real estate), but also a mother of three.

And yet she finds time to run a kitchen that produces fabulous baked goods. The business is actually an offshoot of a favorite family bonding activity—having meals together.

"Every weekend we have a family outing or gathering. We love to eat," she says.

"We" includes husband Rene, a businessman and honorary consul of Bulgaria, and children RJ, a television personality and executive vice president of Ledesco, the family-owned real estate company; only daughter Rina, one of Manila's Five Loveliest in 1998 and a language coordinator at Assumption College; and the youngest Rico, a student at the Berklee School of Music in Boston.

Cakes, served on a nice silver platter, became standard fare not just for family meals but also for parties and get-togethers the Ledesmas hosted. Rina used to bake the cakes with their househelp. When she became too busy, the domestic staff continued to bake using her recipes.

Now, Ledesma's moist chocolate cake, melt-in-your-mouth Brazo de Mercedes and creamy Fresh Milk Bread Pudding are beginning to be the talk of the town.

Supervisor

Though she doesn't do any baking, Ledesma personally supervises the preparation of the cakes in her fully equipped kitchen in Dasmarinas. She also is in charge of "marketing," promoting her kitchen's products to friends and acquaintances.

"I don't have a hand in baking per se, but I'm good in supervising the kitchen and keeping things the way [they should be]," Ledesma says. "I know if the cake is prepared correctly or not."

By word of mouth, her desserts, especially the chocolate cake, are slowly becoming popular. Even Lifestyle's Kitchen Rescue columnist Reggie Aspiras finds her chocolate cake irresistible and encourages her readers to try it because "it is soooooo good!"

Ledesma has three kitchen girls, Lita, Maricar and Guia, baking the cakes, the demand for which continues to rise. And when she entertains at home, dessert becomes one of the highlights of the meal, her guests expecting to sample her kitchen's baked delights.

Favorites

"We used to prepare different kinds of desserts, but it's always the chocolate cake, bread pudding and Brazo de Mercedes that the guests prefer," says Ledesma.

The moist chocolate cake is the dense and gooey type, while the velvety sweet bread pudding with rich butter and caramel sauce tastes like leche flan. Ledesma's meringue roll with egg filling, Brazo de Mercedes, has just the right sweetness and is perfect with a hot cup of coffee or tea.

The chocolate cake sells for P800, bread pudding for P650 and Brazo de Mercedes for P400.

Ledesma used to give her desserts as gifts. But now friends buy them specially during holidays. Her loyal clientele includes Agnes Huibonhwa, Babot Oreta and Marilou Pine-da.

Ledesma says, in a week, her girls bake 20-30 cakes, primarily the chocolate cake. The popularity of the chocolate cake gave the business its name, Fortune Ledesma's Chocolate Cake (8443663, 8109729 or 8939075).

"We used to call the business Tooth Fairy, but my friends kept saying Fortune Ledesma's chocolate cake so I renamed it, to their delight," she says.

Known as a civic leader and honorary consul of Monaco, Fortune Ledesma is now also gaining fame for her chocolate cakes and other desserts from the family kitchen

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E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

Mother's Day treats



HEAVEN 'n Eggs presents Newport's Calamari Breakfast, served with bagel and cream cheese or California Rice; and Pancake Parade, two stacks of 12" pancakes with mango, kiwi, strawberry, blueberries, bananas and cream. Get a free stuffed toy when you order Cape Fish Pan Fried Nile Snapper Fillet this May as part of the Mother's Month promo. Visit Heaven 'n Eggs at the CKB building on Tomas Morato, Quezon City; Glorietta 4; Fuente Circle in Eastwood City; and Market! Market! at the Fort. Call 3762674.



TSUKIJI, Azuma-ya and Cirkulo will be open for lunch and dinner on Sunday, Mother's Day. Milky Way Café will be open only for lunch. All restaurants are located at Milky Way Building, 900 A. Arnaiz Avenue cor. Paseo de Roxas, Makati. Call Tsukiji at tel. 8434285/8122913; Azumaya, tel. 8176252/8130671; Cirkulo, tel. 8108735/8102763; and Milky Way Café, tel. 8434124/8437124.



THE BELLEVUE Hotel offers Mother's Day Blowout Promo deluxe room accommodation for only P4,600+ per night May 12-14. Guests get complimentary massage Shiatsu or Swedish body massage plus free use of sauna and Jacuzzi at the Bellevue Spa Club, plus a 20-percent discount in dining outlets and discount card on selected items at Rustan's Department Store. Meanwhile, The Bellevue's cake of the month is Sorentino, combining cinnamon and amaretto in milk couverture mousse. Call 7718181.

CROWNE PLAZA GALLERIA Manila offers "Must for Moms" on May 14. Mom gets a gift and a chance to win a three-day trip to Singapore with InterCon Hotel accommodations for two by availing of the buffet at Seven Corners, Xin Tian Di or Raphael Café. Mom can also enjoy a weekend at the hotel at the discounted rate of P3700+, by booking on May 12-14. Call 6337111/7436 or e-mail abichang@gmail.com

EDSA SHANGRI-LA lets Mom's Little Chefs, kids aged 8-12, prepare a six-course lunch under the guidance of big chefs for Mother's Day. Lunch will be served at the Lobby Lounge. Participating kids pay P5,800, inclusive of lunches May 13-14 and set lunch for mom and dad on Sunday. Call 6369092 or visit neil.rumbaoa@shangri-la.com for other Mother's Day activities.

HOTEL PHILIPPINE PLAZA'S newest restaurant, Spiral, gives Mom a choice of Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, South East Asian cuisines, grilled food and desserts. Champagne and sparkling wines are part of the Mother's Day buffet. Mom also gets a rose and a chance to bring home a special gift from Lancôme. Merit has a "Decorate Mom's Picture Frame" activity for kids. All mothers get a chance to win an all-day pampering at the Hotel Philippine Plaza Spa. Call 5515555 loc. 1086 or 6988 for reservations.

DINING OUT

INTERCONTINENTAL MANILA offers room packages and dining options for Mother's Day. Café Jeepney offers lunch/dinner buffet on May 14. One person in a group of five diners gets to dine for free. A minimum food bill of P3,000/person at the Prince Albert Rotisserie will mean a 30-percent discount on a guest's next visit to the restaurant. Swimming and buffet will be featured at the poolside. Room packages consist of Summer Break and Family Weekend Getaway. Rates range from P5,500 net for a Deluxe Room to P8,500 net for a Junior Suite. Call 8159711.

MANDARIN ORIENTAL offers meals, room packages and giveaways on Mother's Day. Globe Platinum Card will let a mom dining with at least three other adults eat for free at Tin Hau. Paseo Uno will feature special lunch and dinner buffets while The Tivoli's will have a special five-course dinner set menu, among others. Mandarin room packages are available at P4,500 for an overnight stay and P3,800 for one night. Mother's Day gifts, starting at P1,000, are available until May 14. The hotel also celebrates Iloilo's exciting cuisine at "Manamit!—An Ilonggo Culinary Festival" at the Captain's Bar May 8-19. Call 8199667 and 7508888/2220 or visit charisso@mhog.com

THE MANILA PAVILION HOTEL offers moms lunch and dinner buffet at P850 per person. As a special treat, moms dining with three other people get to eat for free. Call 5261212/2318.

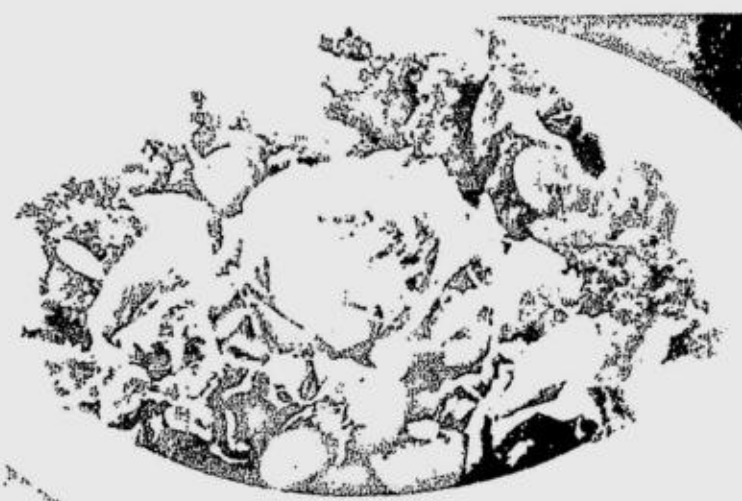
RICHMONDE HOTEL'S Grill offers Mother's Day buffet at P900 net per person. Children 6-12 years old get to dine at half the price while toddlers 5 years old and below eat for free. Moms checking in May 12-14 pay the local resident's rate of P3,100 for a Superior Room with buffet breakfast for two persons. Call 6898419 and 6898411/12.

DIAMOND HOTEL'S Restaurant Le Bellevue offers a meal for as low as P750. Palm Court Café's Mothers' Day buffet is available for P1,000 and dinner buffet for P950. A meal at Yurakuen Japanese Restaurant costs about P1,100. Mothers who dine in any of the three restaurants will get tokens and a voucher valid until June 18. Call 5283000.

THE OLD SWISS INN in Makati has giveaways for moms who will dine there on Mother's Day. On May 14, moms dining at the Inn can join a raffle for a chance to win one of 20 gift certificates from Neo Spa for a relaxing, 45-minute reflexology session. Mother's Day doesn't have to be limited to just one day. Mom is in for a treat with Lamb Festival that includes, in Makati, Charred Lamb with Truffle Vinaigrette and Sundried Tomatoes, Provencal Barbeque Lamb, Lamb Shank with Grape Salad, Epigrammas, and Crown Roast Rack of Lamb. The Paco branch will serve Australian Lamb Shoulder Caldereta, Australian Lamb Shanks, Australian Lamb Shoulder Barbeque, Spice Australian Lamb Curry, and Australian Lamb Burger Steak. The Old Swiss Inn



MAKATI Shangri-La has a special sweet treat for mom, a luscious Lemon Torte for only P950 from Sinfully Circles at Level 1. Contact 8138888/7463 or e-mail stacey.villanueva@shangri-la.com



ITALIANNI'S Restaurant gives mothers free Oatmeal Bread as a simple token and tribute on May 14. Treat mom and grandma to some of Italianni's bestsellers. Appetizers include Spinach and Artichoke Formaggio and Summer Trio Salads, Chicken Italianni's and a variety of pasta dishes. End a hearty meal with Italianni's sweet indulgences like Chocolate Eruption. Italianni's Restaurant has branches at Glorietta 4 (tel. 7527685); Greenbelt 2 (tel. 7280291); Alabang Town Center (tel. 7723320); Libis (tel. 6380828); Greenhills (tel. 7232998); Tomas Morato (tel. 3762382); Gateway Mall (tel. 9123738); and SM Megamall (tel. 6333505). A branch will open soon at Mall of Asia.

branches are at The Garden Plaza Hotel & Suites, 1030 Belen St., Paco, Manila, tel. 5213002, 5262739, 522483 loc. 115; and G/F, Olympia Courtyard Suites, Makati Avenue cor. Tomas Morato St., Makati City, tel. 8188251, 8180098, 8121010 loc. 511 to 512.

CHATEAU 1771 El Pueblo will be giving away on Mother's Day free gift certificates to Bikram Yoga Manila. Those who made their reservations early for May 14 have a chance to get one of a limited number of gift certificates for a session of posture and breathing exercises at the yoga center. Chateau 1771 will also give away limited edition of golf umbrellas. The restaurant is at El Pueblo Real de Manila, ADB Avenue cor. Julia Vargas Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City. It is a member of the Chateau 1771 Group of Restaurants that includes Sentro 1771 in Greenbelt 3, Portico and Sidebar in Malate. Call 6317340 to 41. Call 6317339.

CAFÉ ADRIATICO salutes mothers May 13 and 14. At Café Adriatico Malate, Gateway or Eastwood, Mom's lunch or dinner is free for groups of five, dining a la carte. She gets for free a Café Adriatico Westgate Sunday lunch buffet, if she is dining with a group of six.

BURG00 presents the "Steak, Salmon and Shrimps" and the "Chicken, Shrimps and Ribs" combinations for moms. On May 12-14, moms who will order the special dishes will get free French bread with Anchor butter. They can also

THE PANTALAN Maynila Restaurant along the Manila Bay, beside the old Army and Navy Complex at the Rizal Park, offers moms traditional Filipino favorites like kare-kare, pinakbet, Batangas bulalo, Pantalan Inihaw Fiesta and sweet tropical fruits. Call 4004371 or 4009792.



THE EMERORS' Buffet at Crustasia offers Vietnamese, Thai and Chinese cuisines starting May 12 at 3/F, The Podium in Ortigas Center. The restaurant also presents two new menu categories, The Asian Seafood Theater and Asian Deep Fried and Barbeque Specials. Mothers who dine on Mother's Day weekend get a free stuffed toy. Crustasia is also at the Rockwell Power Plant Mall in Makati. Call 7285463 or 6313857.

take home Anchor mugs and Lipton tea bags. Other freebies include Pillsbury One-step Leche Flan. Call 9277424, 8981815, 6875254, 7264663 and 9136112.

CHINESE MONK gives free Lipton tea bags and fresh flowers to moms who will dine May 12-14. On Mother's Day, mom gets to take home a Pillsbury One-step Leche Flan, among other special freebies. Call 8974129 for details.

GOLDILOCKS Bakeshop offers the Nelusko Premium Cake to mark Mother's Day. The three-layered choco chiffon cake has Nelusko icing and cashew praline. It is topped with cream rosettes made with the same Nelusko icing, trimmed with more cashew praline bits, and drizzled with chocolate ganache. Mom may also enjoy a Dulce de Leche Roll.

THE HYATT REGENCY MANILA presents at the Café al Fresco the "Lamb and Asparagus Festival" May 13-June 13. Executive chef Hans-Martin Bräcker will create various entrées using both lamb and asparagus spears imported mostly from Germany. Call 8331234.

THE MABUHAY MANOR offers a delectable poolside party experience of Cebu's world-famous *sutukil* nightly, 6-10 p.m., at the Sutukil Restaurant. "Sutukil" comes from the Cebuano words "sugba," "tula" and "kilaw," which are three ways of preparing fresh seafood. *Sugba* entails broiling fish over charcoal. *Tula* is cooking fish in boiling water with spices and seasonings. *Kilaw* means to prepare fresh fish in a mix of vinegar, onions, garlic and pepper. The Mabuhay Manor is along FB Harrison Street in Pasay City. Call 8314641.

A blend of flavors from China to Arabia

THE PENINSULA MANILA'S Spices is showcasing until May 20 Thai food that combines the best of several Eastern cuisine, evoking the tastes of hot Szechuan Chinese, tropical Malaysian, creamy southern Indian coconut sauces and aromatic spices of Arabia.

Guest chef is Sumalee Boonek, chef de cuisine of The Peninsula Bangkok's Thiptara Thai Restaurant.

"It's an exciting meal for everyone as I prepare a lot of curries, salads and dishes combining traditional Thai and Chinese favorites," says Boonek, who is doing the Thai food fair for the third year, during the press dinner at Spices (tel. 8872888 ext. 2168 and 2956).

Boonek prepared Goong Oob Woon-Sen or roasted prawns with glass noodles and ginger, cooked with oyster sauce and Chinese wine, to give the media people a taste of what the fair is offering.

Manila Pen's Thai food festival,



YUM Thua-Ploo, wing bean salad with shrimps and peanuts

"Thiptara in Spices," is also featuring culinary creations Boonek made popular at Peninsula Bangkok's authentic Thai home-style food place that overlooks the Chao Phraya River.

For the food fest, Boonek is serving, for appetizers, Wing Bean Salad with Shrimps and Peanuts (Yum Thua-Ploo), chopped crunchy *sigarillas* blended with coconut milk, fish sauce (*nam pla*) and chili sauce; Chiang



MUN CHUAM, tapioca in soft syrup with coconut sauce

Mai Sausage Salad with Ginger, Shallots and Fresh Chili (Yum Nhaem), and Fish Cake with Cucumber-Peanut Sauce (Thod Man Pla).

Featured soup is Tom Yum Thai-Lay, spicy and sour seafood.

Main course includes Massaman Curry with Beef Tenderloin and Potatoes (Mas-sa-man Nua), Steamed Sea Bass with Spicy and Sour Sauce (Pla-Kra-Phong Nueng Ma-naw), and Goong Oob Woon-sen. People can have either Fried Rice with Mixed Vegetables and Egg (Khao Phad Phak) or Steamed Jasmine Rice.

Desserts are Tapioca in Soft Syrup with Coconut Sauce (Mun Chuam) and Sticky Rice with Sweet Mango (Khao-Niew Ma-muang).

Boonek's expertise in Thai cuisine has won her awards, including a gold medal from the Thailand Chefs Association, and taken her around the world.

At Spices, she's also recreating her signature dishes, such as Barbecued-Marinated Chicken with Lemongrass and Sweet and Sour Sauce (Gai Yang Ta-Krai), Sea Bass

with Red Curry Cream Sauce (Choo Chee Pla-Ka-Phong), Grilled Prawn Salad with Pomelo (Yum Som-O), and stir-fried rice noodles with shrimps wrapped in egg nets (Phad Thai Khai Hor), creating a feast for the palate and the eyes.

Prizes

"Thiptara in Spices" is also giving diners a chance to win round-trip business-class tickets for two to Bangkok, courtesy of Thai Airways International, and a three-night stay for two in a Deluxe Suite at The Peninsula Bangkok, inclusive of daily American breakfast for two and one set dinner for two at Thiptara Thai restaurant.

Aside from the food festival, the Peninsula Academy Cooking Class will also offer basic Thai cooking lessons, "Thailand in My Plate," May 20. Boonek will introduce students to the intricacies of preparing a traditional Thai family meal. Fee is inclusive of a three-course lunch, a Peninsula Academy apron and a special gift. *Vangie Baga-Reyes*

Wedding cake baking class

DOROTHY'S COOKING School will be conducting a hands-on workshop on fondant cakes May 15-17.

The course is designed for people who want to go into fondant cake baking as a business or a hobby, especially with June, the month of weddings, coming up. The Sans Rival class will be offered anew on May 19 and the Ensaymada and Siopao class on May 23. Cooking with Flair and Lots of Garlic cooking classes are scheduled for May 27. They are designed for beginners and those who want to learn easy recipes for entertaining.

Call 7217735 and 4167968.

THURSDAY, MAY 11, 2006

LIFESTYLE

Wining and dining with star gourmets

WITH ALL THE LITERATURE pertaining to the World Gourmet Summit, a quote from Virginia Woolf always seemed to present itself so boldly: "One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well."

After attending the summit, I attest to the truth of Woolf's declaration, as well as to the decadence of the experience.

Featuring a strong lineup of internationally acclaimed food experts, as well as an array of culinary workshops, wine-tasting sessions and gourmet dinners, the summit so successfully demonstrated the concept of gastro-tourism, positioning Singapore as a premier foodies' destination, the gourmet capital of Asia. It offers visitors and discerning gourmet food enthusiasts the opportunity to indulge in learning and experiencing the exquisite art of wining and dining.

Galaxy of stars

What started as a vision to introduce a world-class dining experience has now evolved into an annual signature event.

The World Gourmet Summit celebrated 10 years of Epicurean excellence. This year, it hosted chefs whose work had received Michelin stars, as well as a record number of kitchen celebrities. Among the celebrated chefs were the legendary Philippe Legendre, recipient of the 1996 Meilleur Ouvrier de France, who guided the renowned Le Cinq to its three Michelin stars in 2003; and Santi Santamaria, a self-taught chef who was the first in Catalonia to receive three Michelin stars in 1995.

Other luminaries were, among others, Paco Roncero (one Michelin star) from Spain, who is considered Ferrán Adrià's most outstanding disciple; Gennaro Esposito (one Michelin star) from Italy, who counts Alain Ducasse as one of his culinary admirers; Laurent Tourondel of the BLT (Fish) restaurant in New York that gained a Michelin star when the Michelin Guide Book unveiled its listing in 2005; Antonin Bonnet (one Michelin star) from The Greenhouse, United Kingdom; Kevin Thornton (one Michelin star) of Thornton's restaurant in Dublin, Ireland; Alessandro Stratta from Wynn Las Vegas; Susur Lee from Canada; and Terje Ness from Norway.

Giving a sneak preview of the wonders of gastronomy was Spoon, a dining concept by Alain Ducasse, who currently holds nine Michelin stars. Other celebrities who graced the event, hosted private dinners and shot episodes for their television specials were Discovery Travel & Living's Ian Wright, the award-winning host of the Globe Trekker; The Rubino Brothers of Made to Order; and Malaysia's Celebrity Chef Wan.

With great food came great wines from a stellar list of wineries: Domaine Bonneau Du Martray, Domaine Michel Gros, Château

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

Cos d'Estournel, Château-Figeac, Domaine Joseph Faiveley from France and Luciano Sandrone from Piedmont, Italy, who, during wine master classes and vintner dinners, presented decades of their respective vintages, as well as their award-winning collections.

This year, a brand new twist was added. For the first time, 10 of Singapore's leading restaurants—Au Jardin, Au Petit Salut, Garibaldi, Hua Ting, Li Bai, My Humble House, Rang Mahal, Saint Julien, Saint Pierre and Tenshin—created special celebratory menus and promotional activities. French Charcuterie, a Molecular Gastronomy Dinner, tea appreciation, the vertical

tasting of The Macallan whisky were but a few.

The celebration came to end with the Meat & Livestock Australia's gourmet barbecue, a most befitting feast that capped 19 decadent days of glorious food and fine wine.

I encourage those who enjoy the pleasures of fine cuisine, as well as the sophisticated, discerning and well-heeled traveler in constant pursuit of unique traveling experiences, to live, eat, drink and breathe the good life at the World Gourmet Summit 2007! See you there!

For inquiries, contact the Singapore Tourism Board (Tan Yen Nee/Eileen Lee) through (65) 68313867/68313612; e-mail TAN_Yen_Nee@stb.gov.sg, Eileen_LEE@stb.gov.sg or info@world-gourmetsummit.com

Next week, join me as I recount cooking, wining and dining, Michelin-style!



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Beijing-Taipei food fest May 20

THE 1ST BEIJING-TAIPEI CULINARY FESTIVAL will be held May 20 at the Pan Pacific Hotel, Adriatico Street, Malate, Manila.

The event was launched recently at Pan Pacific, with chefs from Taipei and Beijing demonstrating their cooking skills.

Organized by the International Culinary Chefs Association, the event will feature more than 50 master chefs from Beijing and Taipei.

The Beijing chefs will be headed by Du Le, president of the International Cooking Union Association in Beijing, while the president of the China Gourmet Association, Hsu Wang Hou, will lead the Taipei group.

The culinary festival may also include on-the-spot cooking exhibition, food carving, and food display, among others.

A highlight of the event is the 10-course grand laurist dinner featuring the specialties of the chefs.

Jeson Kiokan, president of the new International Culinary Chefs, said recognition awards would be presented to the visiting chefs.

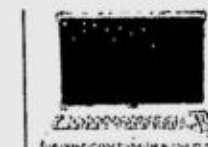
The 1st Beijing-Taipei Culinary Festival sets the stage for the planned December Asian Culinary Chefs Competition in Manila with about 600 chef participants.

Mag holds cooking contest

COOK, THE CULINARY LIFESTYLE magazine, with the International Food Exhibition Philippines 2006 will hold "The Ultimate Fighting Cooks Year Two: The Cook and LG Electronics Philippines Grand Picnic Cookout" on May 14 at the World Trade Center, Pasay City.

Now on its second year, the event will showcase the country's best chefs and their cooking skills and creativity as they work under time pressure to prepare the ultimate summer picnic showcase.

Also part of the event is Cook Culinary Presents, a series of cooking demonstrations where food aficionados can learn new and exciting recipes from experts.



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In search of 'turrone' and 'pastel'

FROM THE AIR, WHAT WELCOMES the visitor to Camiguin Island is the sandbar, shaped like a white crescent surrounded by an aquamarine sea. The trip there was the last of my abbreviated tour of Luzon (Coron, Palawan), Visayas (Boracay) and Mindanao. Camiguin is the smallest province of Mindanao locat-

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix



ed north of Cagayan de Oro.

A teaching stint in Cagayan de Oro ages ago introduced me to Camiguin. And the introduction was a white can of the best *turrone de mani* I ever tasted. At that time, my friends brought the *turrone* as *pasalubong* with the information that honey was the secret of this wonderful Camiguin specialty.

Funny how one item can be so unforgettable that it was what I looked for as soon as we landed.

Like "parachute" tourists, a group of writers had two full days to explore both the natural wonders of the province (waterfalls and pools of hot, cold and spring water) and the special cooking they do there. While *turrone* wasn't on the agenda, I made it part of our food tour.

The *turrone* maker was elusive. She wasn't there when we came and our guide couldn't tell us who the maker was. So I resigned myself to just remembering the crisp white *barquillos* that enveloped the chewy peanuts mixed with honey.

But lunch at the Paras Beach Resort introduced us to the manager, Wing Bollozos, who happened to belong to the family that made the *turrone*. And he said he would arrange for me to meet his aunt, Rita Bollozos.

Unfortunately Wing's aunt was in Cagayan de Oro for a medical checkup. But another aunt and his cousins and were around.

Paz Bollozos Cavada and her husband Pat were amused at how I never forgot about the *turrone* years after that first bite. They teased me about buying several years worth to make up for the deprivation. They also confirmed that honey was an important ingredient, specifying Mindanao honey because



TURRONE de Mani of Camiguin

changing the source, they feared, would change the taste.

Sealed bags

The white can is no longer the container. A plastic bag now seals in the *turrone*. Buy eight packs and they will be put in a box.

The brand name is La Salud, after Paz and Rita's mother who started the *turrone* business in 1920. Her picture at over 90 years of age was pointed out to me by the third-generation cousins, Maygeo Locsin and Filomena Cavada. Both said the *turrone* recipe was taught to Salud by her mother, Rita Morales Barrientos.

Yet, while the Bollozos are content with this small-scale cottage industry they've had for 80 years, Vjandep Bakeshop has grown from a home business to a full-scale baking operation on the island and in Cagayan de Oro city. The name combines the initials of proprietors Virgilio José and Eleanor Popera with the word "and" figuring quite prominently and the "j" silent.

Its first and still main product is the *pastel* de Camiguin, a small cone-shaped bread with a creamy *yema* filling.

Wing Bollozos told me that Salud, his grandmother, used to do the *pastel*. That fact is acknowledged in the calling card of the

Vjandep proprietors. It was Eleanor who thought of baking and selling the *pastel* of her province. That happened at the time she didn't go with her husband, Virgilio, who traveled to different places as an army engineer.

Military operation

All the signs around the factory, from inspirational messages, prayers to the lyrics of "Filipino Ako" that workers sing daily point to Virgilio's military training in giving inspiration and requiring discipline. He also gave us the Vjandep timeline.

In 1990, his wife used his Christmas bonus to begin the *pastel* business. In 1993, Eleanor studied commercial baking after which she reformulated the *pastel* recipe. The result is a highly successful product that is a must-buy when one visits Camiguin, as well as Cagayan de Oro city.

Virgilio, however, still prefers the *bonete* of his Marikina hometown, almost like the *pastel* but without the *yema* filling.

From the regular *pastel*, 13 varieties have been developed. These are the special and 12 flavors that include chocolate, cheese, *durian*, *langka*, pineapple, strawberry, *ube*, *macapuno*, *bayabas* and mango. We sampled the baked *siopao*, also a hit, discovered by accident when the *siopao* wasn't working so the *siopao* buns were baked instead. There was also *torta*, a cake with fluted sides that had the texture of a rougher *mamon*.

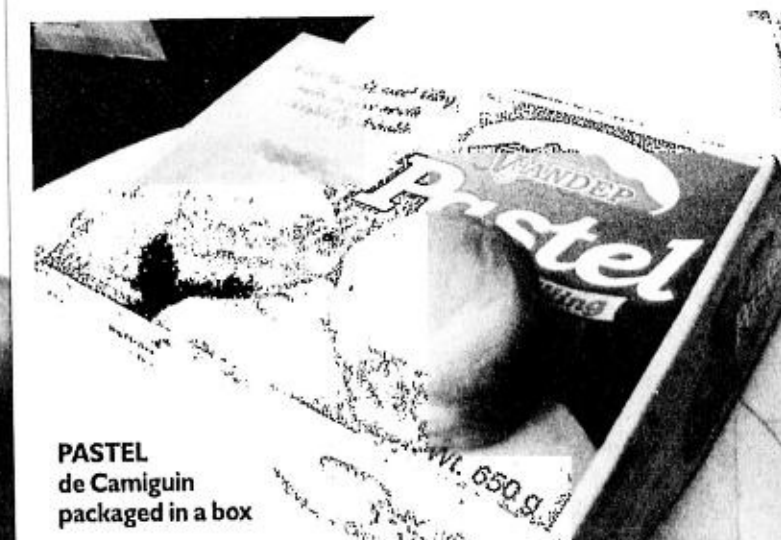
So there's more to Camiguin Island than the *lanzones* everyone equates with the province. For me, it was the *turrone* de *mani* that took me years to taste again.



PAZ BOLLOZOS Cavada with husband Pat



ELEANOR Popera José reformulated the *pastel* recipe.



PASTEL de Camiguin packaged in a box

Learn cake decorating

MAYA KITCHEN WILL CONDUCT a class on Cake Decorating, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., May 13 and 20. The course covers fundamentals of cake decorating, coloring, jelly lettering, basic flowers, icing application and cake designing.

Fundamentals of Bakery Production, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., May 16-19 and May 30-June 2, develops a working knowledge of standard baking techniques like the use of ready mixes.

A Japanese teacher will teach Japanese Cooking, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., May 20, demonstrating Miso soup, Mixed Tempura, Kamameshi, Assorted Sushi and Sukiyaki.

Basic Culinary Course will be taught 9 a.m.-2 p.m., May 23-23.

It will cover proper hygiene, sanitation and safety; nutrition and nutritional cooking; etc.

Low-Calorie Cooking will be taught 2-5 p.m., May 24-25. A lecture on how to calculate calorie requirements and tips on low calorie cooking will be given.

The Dimsum class, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., May 27, will include Pork and Vegetable Dumplings, Fish balls, Siopao-Cuapao, Kikiam, Chicken Feet, Buchi and a bonus Sweet Chili Fishball Sauce.

Visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesday-Saturday) at 8/F, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave. (formerly Pasay Road), Makati. Call 8921185 or 8925011 loc 108. E-mail mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph

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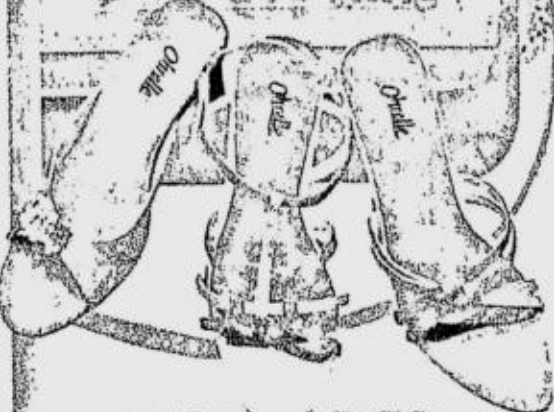
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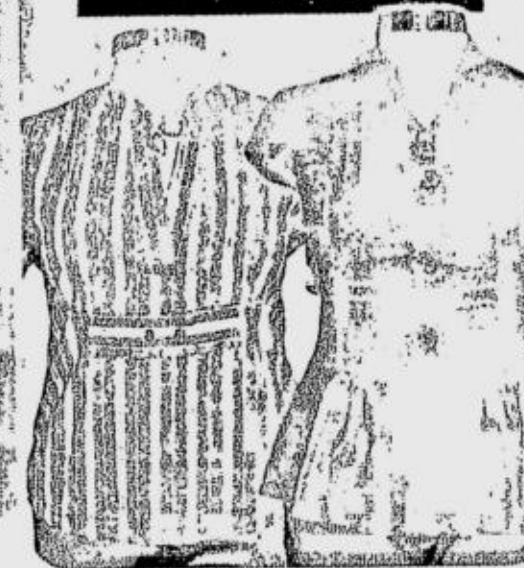
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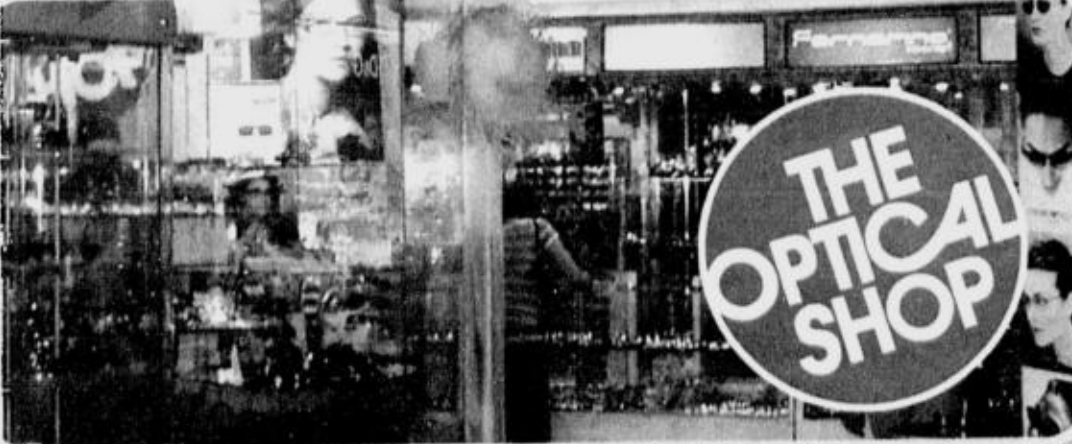


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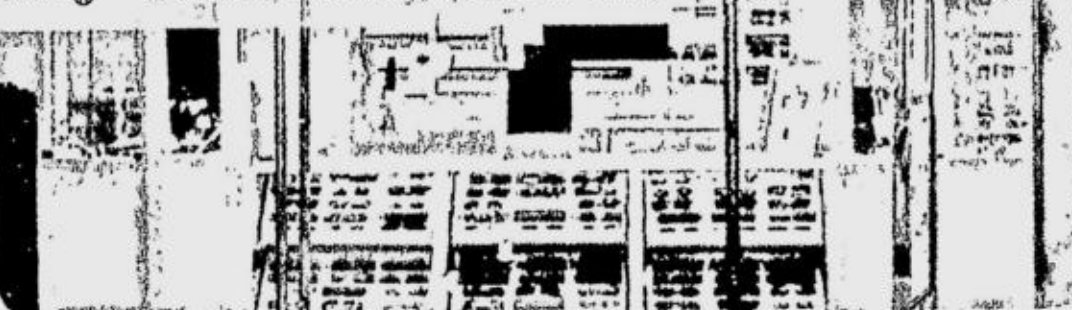
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MY
I LOVE YOU

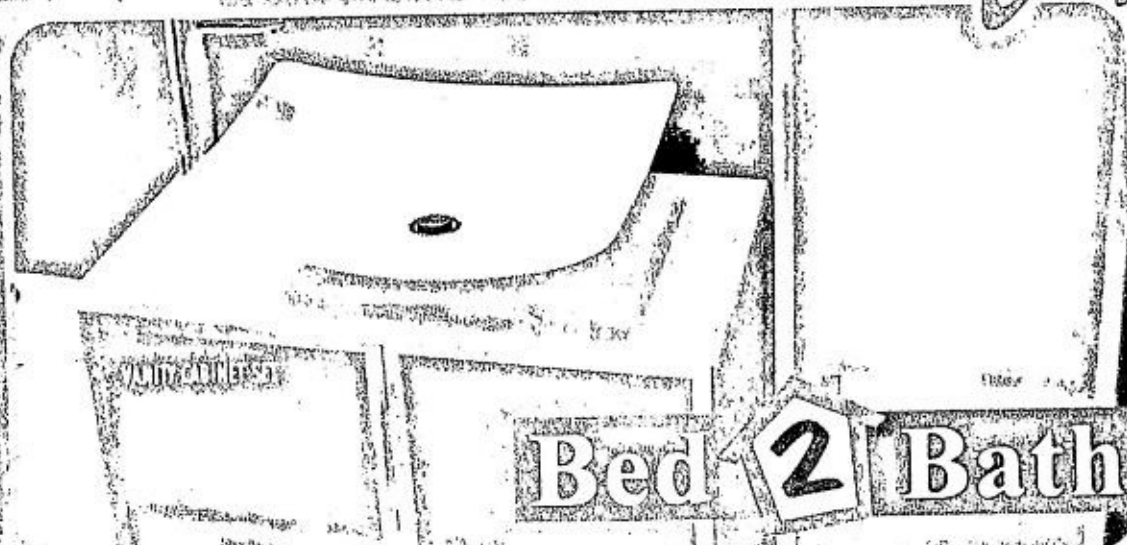
beautify the home

with

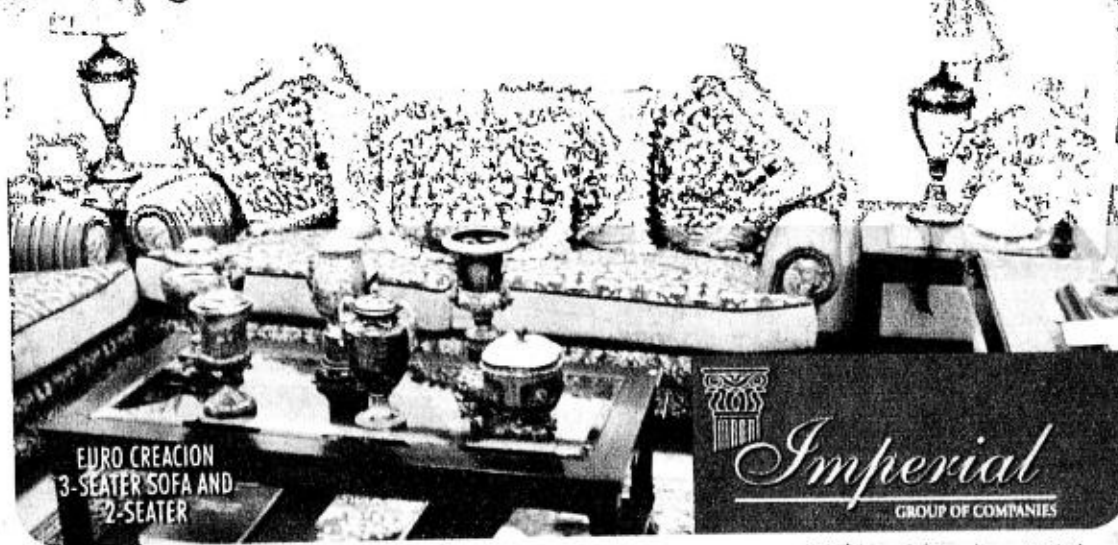
Mom

SM

SUPERMALLS



Bed 2 Bath

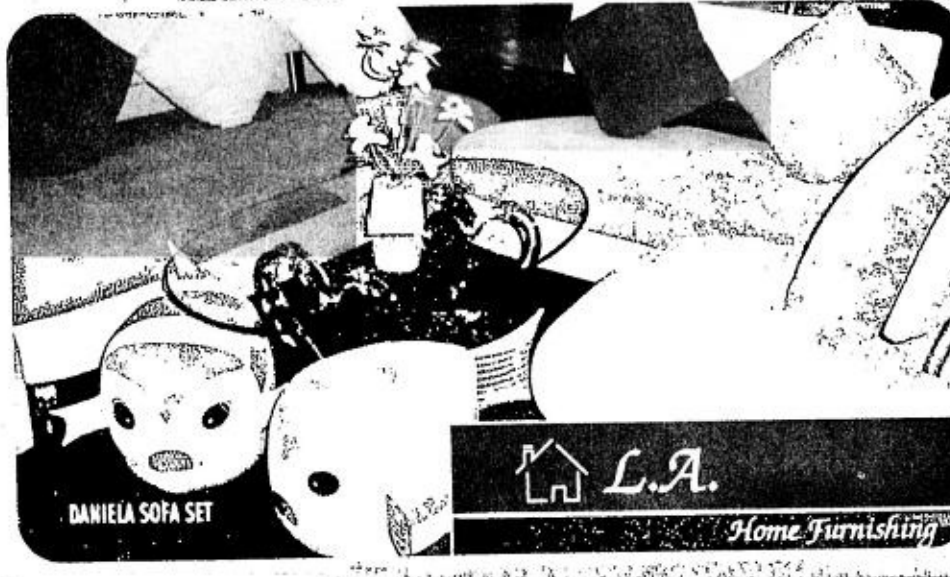


EURO CREACION
3-SEATER SOFA AND
2-SEATER

Imperial
GROUP OF COMPANIES



CitiBeds



DANIELA SOFA SET

L.A.

Home Furnishing

Muebles Italiano



ORIENTAL TREASURES



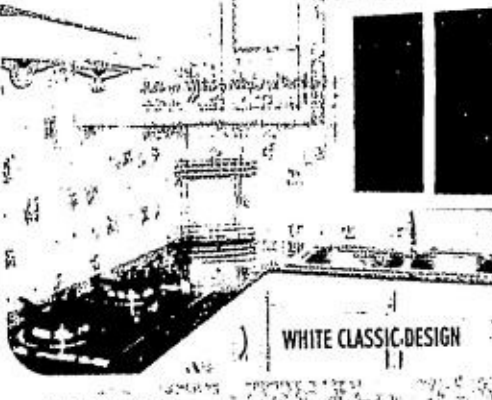
CHINESE LUCKY CHARMS, FIGURINES & FENG SHUI ITEMS

PERFECT KITCHEN



KITCHENCO

LOWER GROUND FLOOR, SM CITY FAIRVIEW ANNEX

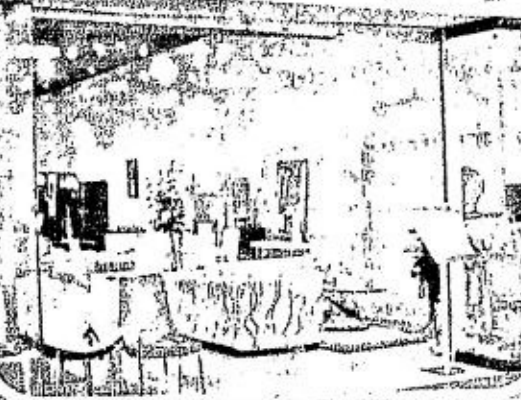


WHITE CLASSIC DESIGN



Moen Home Living Inc.

play & display



VIEHA VANILLA KITCHEN SHOWCASE

META STONE



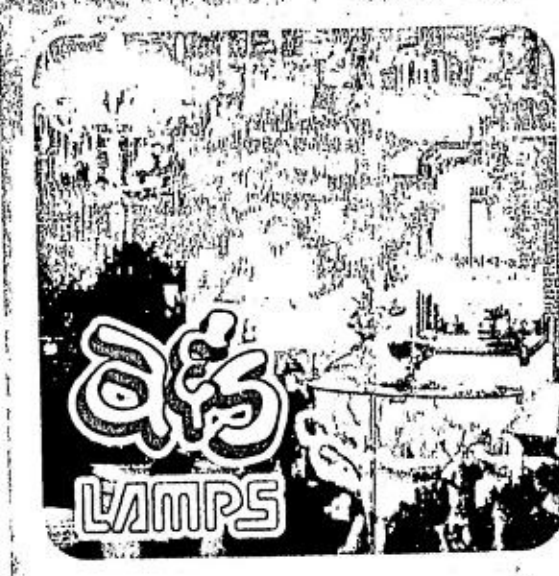
FISHER & PAYKEL
REFRIGERATOR

Fisher & Paykel

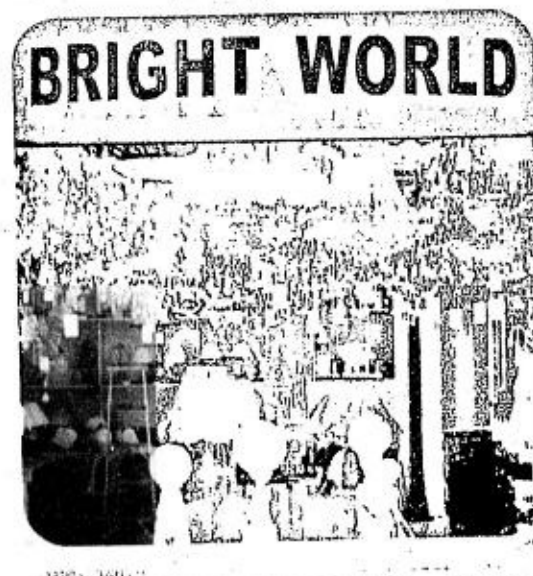
innovative living



FRAME PLUS



des LAMPS



BRIGHT WORLD

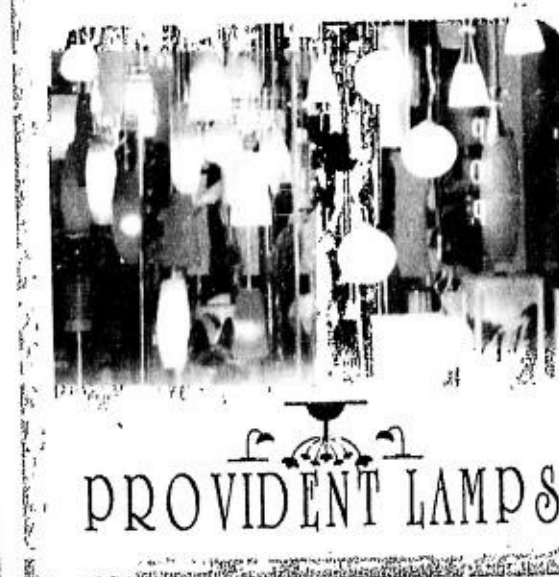


Gallery Genesis

OIL ON CANVAS MOTHER & CHILD



OLD MANILA



PROVIDENT LAMPS



ROBLES HERITAGE

CAPIZ TABLE LAMP

CAPIZ PICTURE FRAME

SM

SUPERMALLS

zestful dining

with Mom

Happy Mother's Day on May 14!

Cabalen

Eat All You Can. Eat All You Want

Mother's Day Treat
Pick a Prize
and
win great freebies from

NATURAL Sea Beauty and SHEENE



mom's Favorites



BEEF NOODLES



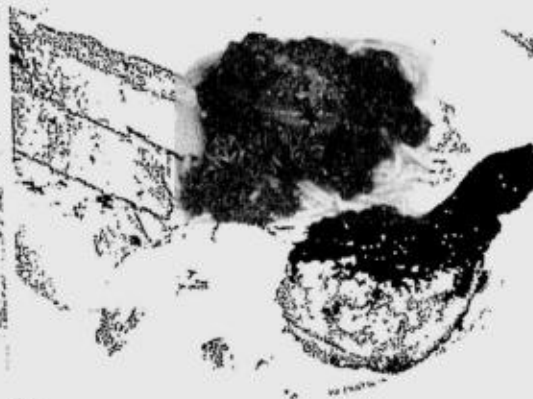
MANGO PRAWN SALAD

Pho Hoa

SM CITY NORTH EDSA • SM MEGAMALL • SM CITY MANILA

ALMON MARINA

Sandwich Bar & DELI



PASTA WITH ROAST CHICKEN, BREAD & SALAD (BOLOGNESE)



SHABU SHABU BARBECUE HOT POT

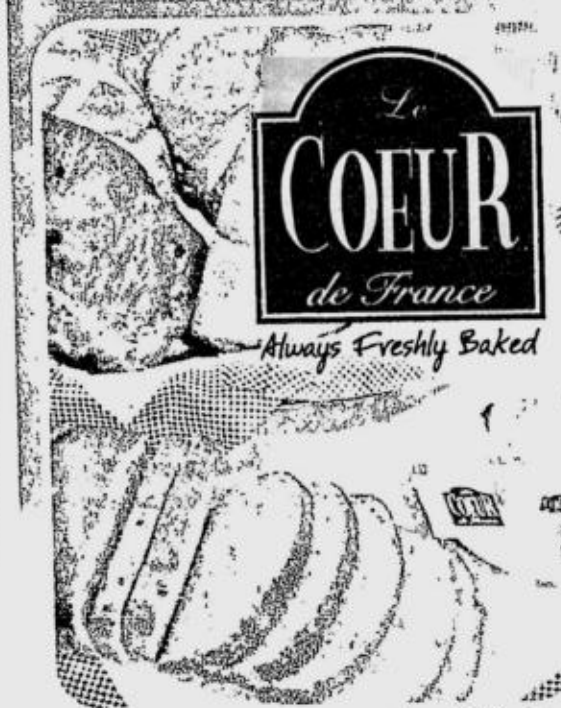


Tong Yang

LEVEL 4, BLDG. A, SM MEGAMALL

for Mom Dulcinea

Churros in a Box!



COEUR de France

Always Freshly Baked

Delifrance



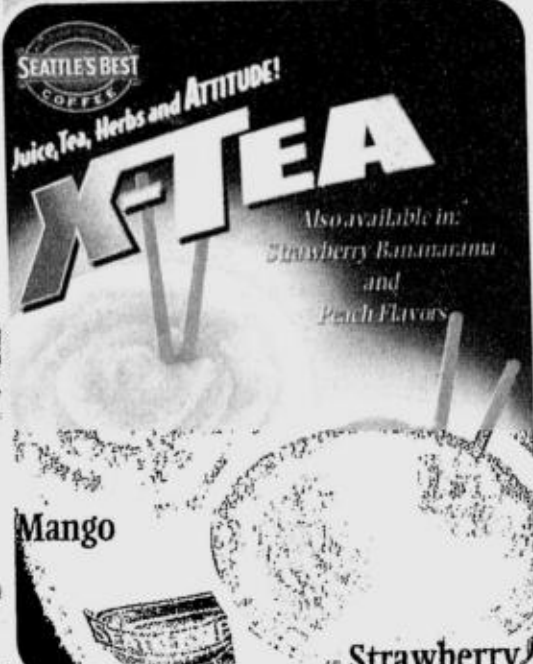
It's Love at First Sight with Delifrance Breakfast Tray



insANELY DELICIOUS!

SM SOUTHMALL LAS PIÑAS • SM MEGAMALL
SM MAKATI • SM CITY SAN LAZARO

say yum with Mom!



K-TEA

Also available in:
Strawberry Bananarama
and
Peach Flavors

Mango

Strawberry

TAKE A STARBUCKS SUMMER FRAPPUCCINO BREAK!



STARBUCKS SUMMER FRAPPUCCINO BREAK! BANANA CHOCOLATE

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COOL

Vanilla Caramel Frost

P160

FOUR SEASONS VANILLA

P198

HAIR HONEY BURRITO

P55

P70

AROMA BLISS

P105

COOL

COOL

COOL

COOL

COOL

Capture the Moment

Capture that "Mom-gick" moment & print at islandphoto



Caring for your Memories...

FUN PHOTOGRAPHY

SUMMER WORKSHOP

MAY 24 - 27, 2006

SM MEGAMALL MEGATRADE HALL

CONFERENCE CENTER

CALLING ALL PHOTO HOBBYISTS AND ENTHUSIASTS

REGISTRATION IS UNTIL MAY 15, 2006

AT ANY GREAT IMAGE OUTLET.

COURSE FEE IS P 5000

GREAT IMAGE

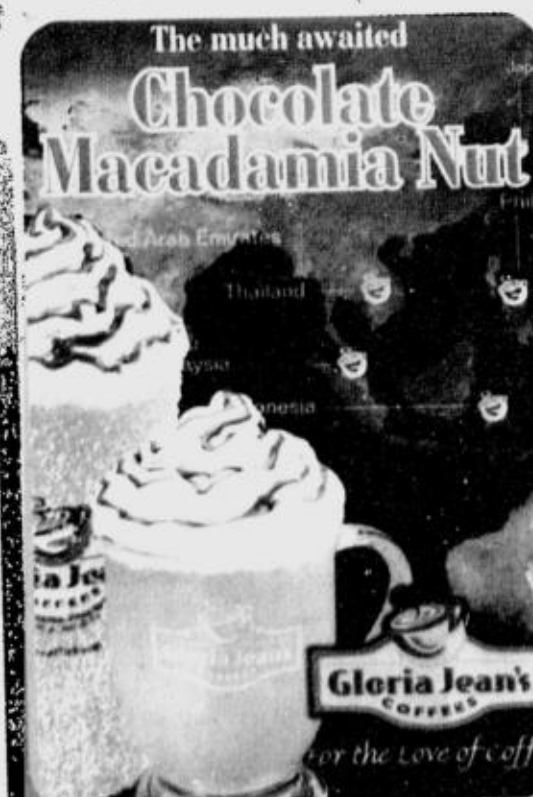
SM CITY NORTH EDSA SM MEGAMALL SM CENTERPOINT SM SOUTHMALL

SM BUCAT SM BICUTAN SM FAIRVIEW SM SAN LAZARO SM MANILA

SM VALENZUELA MENDIOLA MARKET MARKET RIVERBANKS CENTER

STA LUCIA EAST GRAND MALL ROBINSONS ERMITA

ROBINSONS GALLERIA ROBINSONS METRO EAST



Chocolate Macadamia Nut

Also available in:

Vanilla Caramel Frost

P160

FOUR SEASONS VANILLA

P198

HAIR HONEY BURRITO

P55

P70

AROMA BLISS

P105

COOL

COOL

COOL

COOL

Mother & Daughter

Look-Alike Contest Finals

15 Finalist Pairs



Look-Alike Contest Finals

Look-Alike Contest Finals

Look-Alike Contest Finals

Look-Alike Contest Finals

Sesame Beginnings

Parenting Workshop



A special treat for Mother's Day

Fun and exciting discussions about parenting plus games, freebies and lots of prizes!

Qualifiers for 2006 worth of Sesame Beginnings items purchased at the event area.

Also, bring your baby's current pictures and we'll post it on our Baby Gallery!